

BULGARIA GUIDE - BOOK BALKANTOURIST



BULGARIA
GUIDE-BOOK
BALKANTOURIST

BALKANTOURIST, BULGARIA

BALKANTOURIST

SOFIA, 1, LENIN SQUARE, TEL. 7-75-74

CABLES: BALKANTOURIST, SOFIA

TELEX 538

Introduction

The present Tourist Guide, published by the BALKANTOURIST State Travel Bureau, is intended to help foreign tourists plan their tours or holidays in Bulgaria, and to be of service during their sojourn in this country.

The first part gives brief geographical, historical and economic data about the People's Republic of Bulgaria, its general advancement, and the development of tourist travel, motoring and sports.

The second part describes Bulgaria's resorts and objects of tourist interest, particularly points and localities included in the Balkantourist tours and ordinarily visited by foreign guests travelling or spending their holidays in our country.

The third part contains general information which prospective visitors will find useful — visa, customs, currency and other formalities; the various tours organized by Balkantourist; its services terms and other data.

Enquiries about further details should be addressed directly to BALKANTOURIST — SOFIA, 1, Lenin Square or its branches throughout the country.

All foreign travellers will receive the warmest welcome, and a prompt and efficient BALKANTOURIST service at our sunny modern highland and seaside resorts, in the Land of Roses and abundant fruit.

BALKANTOURIST

BRIEF HISTOPICAL DATA

Bulgaria is a small country, with an eventful history more than a millenium old. It has fought off foreign invasions, and at times has been under alien rule for centuries. But the Bulgarian people have always resisted every attempt at subjugation or assimilation, preserving their patriotic spirit and faith in a new life to come.

FIRST BULGARIAN KINGDOM (681—1018)

Towards the second half of the 7th century Slav tribes populated the lands of present day Bulgaria. It was then that Khan Asparuh leading his Bulgar horsemen swooped down from north, conquered the Slavs and founded the First Bulgarian Kingdom in 681.

But in only a short period of history the Bulgars were assimilated by the more numerous compact Slav masses, giving only their name to the new state, and adopting the Slav language and culture.

Under kings Boris and Simeon, Bulgaria gained economic, political and military power and international prestige. Her culture flourished. Her wealth and power rivalled Byzantium, but after prolonged warfare, under king Peter Bulgaria fell under Byzantine rule (1018), and became an ordinary province within the Byzantine Empire.

Towards the end of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, Bulgaria developed as a feudal land. It was then that peasant anti-feudal movement of the Bogomils of a religious character appeared.

All attempts at assimilation proved futile, and the Bulgarian people survived as a nation.

SECOND BULGARIAN KINGDOM (1185—1396)

The brothers Assen and Peter, Bolyars of Turnovo, founded the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. They led a rebellion which liberated Northern Bulgaria, and established their capital at Turnovo. More of the country was liberated under their third brother, Kaloyan, and by the time of Ivan Assen II the land spread over the territory it had under Simeon.

The poverty of the peasant masses and Tatar incursions gave rise to another peasant movement (this time devoid of religious element) led by the common swineherd, Ivailo.

The military glory won by Ivailo against the Tatars finally gave him the royal throne. But in the further struggle against Byzantium instead of relying on his own people, the peasantry, Ivailo sought the support of the Tatars, and was eventually murdered by them in 1280.

OTTOMAN RULE (1396—1878)

This is the darkest period in the history of the Bulgarian people — five centuries of national bondage under alien rule.

The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans established feudal rule. The land was taken from the peasants and the Bulgarians were virtually turned into serfs slaving for the Turkish feudal lords. This marked the beginning of five centuries of darkness, regress and ignorance.

During the first half of the 19th century some of the Balkan peoples won freedom from Ottoman rule, and inspired the national consciousness of the Bulgarians. The movement for national freedom spread rapidly during the second half of the 19th century, culminating with the April Uprising of 1876. In many regions the people rose in arms against the foreign oppressor. Though cruelly suppressed by the Turks, the Uprising played its part in the national-liberation struggle. It is regarded as a prologue, leading to Bulgaria's freedom.

THIRD BULGARIAN KINGDOM (1818—1944)

In modern times Bulgaria regained her sovereignty in 1878 following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877—1878, when the country was liberated from her five centuries long Ottoman bondage.

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

New socialist Bulgaria came into being on September 9, 1944, when a People's Democratic Government came to power.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The People's Republic of Bulgaria occupies the north-eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Her territory covers an area of 110,842 square kilometres.

The Black Sea forms Bulgaria's boundary to the east (400km), the Danube River and Rumania to the north (609km), Yugoslavia to the west (524km), Greece to the south (486km) and Turkey to the south-east (235km).

Some 74,000 sq. km of the territory are plains — 500 m above sea level, 23,000 sq. km hilly country between 500 and 1000 m above sea level, and 13,000 sq. km highlands over 1000 m.

Bulgaria's changing landscape and water resources have turned into an object of increasing interest to foreign travellers.

The climate is moderate, continental. Western Bulgaria has a Central European climate; Southern Bulgaria — a Mediterranean climate. The coastal regions along the Black Sea have a milder autumn and winter. Most parts of the country have seven warm months in the year, from April to October.

The winter season is moderate, and there is a long and hot summer with a temperature of 23° to 35°C.

The biggest inland rivers are the Maritsa — 530 km long, the Toundja — 416 km (368 km before it leaves the confines of the country), the Arda — 267 km (230 km of which in Bulgaria), the Strouma — 392 km (310 in the country).

Towards the middle of 1959, Bulgaria had a population of 7,798,000.

SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE

After long years of struggle, on September 9, 1944, the Bulgarian people established a People's Democratic Government.

The Government of the Fatherland Front has opened a new era in the history of the Bulgarian people.

The progress achieved by Bulgaria in the last few years has indeed been remarkable. New branches of industry have come into being — ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, mechanical engineering, the electrical and chemical industries. There has been an expansion of our light and food industry enterprises. Many of them have been reconditioned and equipped with most modern machinery. Thus Bulgaria has rapidly grown from a purely agricultural land into an industrial-agrarian State. In 1939 the ratio between industry and farming used to be 24.8 : 75.2; in 1960 it changed inversely to nearly 70 : 30 in favour of industry. The ratio between light and heavy industry has also changed, in 1960 standing at 50 : 50. The

general industrial advancement can be well illustrated by the development of electric power.

The output of electric power has increased, as follows:

1939 — 266,000,000 kWh;
1947 — 488,000,000 kWh;
1959 — 3,869,000,000 kWh;
1960 — 4,657,000,000 kWh. i.e., nearly 18 times.

The whole aspect of the countryside has changed. From scattered smallholdings, tilled primitively, the Bulgarian farms have merged into large co-operative estates, highly mechanized and applying most modern agrotechnics. Our home mechanical engineering industry supplies our cooperative farms with the necessary agricultural machinery and equipment and the Chemical Works (Dimitrovgrad) — with chemical fertilizers. Annually some 700,000 to 800,000 hectares are cultivated with an adequate amount of fertilizers, with steadily increasing harvests.

The radical transformation of national economy has been reflected on the development of our foreign trade. In the past Bulgaria was known as the Land of Roses, aromatic tobaccos, Thracian grapes, Dobrudja wheat, eggs and poultry, which were the main items of her export trade. At present, our industrial goods are rapidly taking the lead, and industrial goods with Bulgarian labels are finding their way to the markets in Europe, Near East, Africa and Latin America.

CULTURE

Cultural progress has kept the pace of Bulgaria's rapid economic development.

Some 1,200 school-buildings have been built during the past 15 years, and now every inhabited locality has its school.

In order that workers might continue their education, the Government has set up numerous evening schools, technical colleges and other institutions for vocational training. The special courses organized at our bigger industrial enterprises and departments are now helping improve the qualifications of some 30,000 men and women.

Fifteen new higher educational institutions have appeared. Bulgaria has at present 20 higher institutions of learning with 32 different faculties, which in 1959 had 49,000 students—

fresh cadres for mechanical engineering, transport, building, farming and public health. There are also ten junior colleges with a total of 3,000 students, and two pedagogical institutes for post-graduate work of our teachers.

The State Budget earmarks considerable credits for University scholarships (80 million leva in 1959). So now one half of our University students continue their higher education on State scholarships. The 28 University hostels accommodate a total of 5000.

The theatre and music have likewise developed, and at present the country has 46 dramatic theatres (26 State and 20 under the People's Councils), an Operetta Theatre, a Comedy Theatre and four puppet theatres.

The operatic art deserves special mention. The musical centres in Europe have shown their appreciation of such gifted singers like Boris Hristov, Dimitar Ouzounov, Nikolai Gyaurov, Nikola Nikolov, Elena Nikolai, who have all sung at the most famous opera houses in the world. Bulgaria has five State and 20 amateur operas. The theatre and opera draw annually over two and a half million people.

CINEMA AND FILMS

By 1959 the Bulgarian film industry had produced 35 feature films and more than 600 shorts, documentaries and cartoons, many of which have received honourable mention at International Film Festivals. Before the Second World War the country had 165 cinemas. Their number has now grown to more than 1,500, in addition to mobile units. The number of cinema-goers has increased 10 times.

WIRELESS BROADCASTING

Bulgaria has 7 broadcasting stations. The communal rediffusion network has reached 1840 inhabited localities with a total of 3,500,000 receiving points. The number of wireless sets has reached 740,000.

LITERATURE

During the last 15 years the country has published 27,000 different books with a total circulation of over 200,000,000

copies. 3180 books (27 million copies), 147 magazines, and 84 newspapers with a circulation of 3,600,000,000 were published in 1959 alone.

PHYSICAL CULTURE AND SPORTS

The different sports in this country has developed into a unified system of associations for physical culture and sports, enjoying State support. The budget provides millions of leva for the building of courts and playgrounds and the purchase of sports equipment. A special Law has introduced free medical control, check-ups and services for all sportsmen.

Scores of new Stadiums have been built, as well as hundreds of playgrounds and several thousand basketball and volleyball courts. Sofia alone has a Central Stadium seating 45,000 and several other smaller stadiums.

BULGARIA — A CENTRE OF TOURIST AND HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Bulgaria is comparatively new to the tourist trade, but its resorts and holiday spots, particularly those along the Black Sea coast, have been drawing a steadily increasing flow of tourists, motorists and people coming for their holidays or a cure. The Bulgarian modern seaside resorts now rival the best anywhere in the world.

The Alpine landscape of the Rila and Pirin Mountains, their snow-capped peaks, clear lakes and sunny clearings dotting the virgin pine, oak and beech forests, and the Valley of Roses attract every foreign visitor.

The abundance of aromatic and vitamin-rich fruits and vegetables adds to the attractions of a holiday in Bulgaria.

Modern highways link all cities, resorts and places of tourist interest throughout the land. They are asphalted or paved, with the appropriate markings.

The international road Belgrade-Sofia-Istanbul linking Europe, the Near East and Asia is very convenient and 363 kilometres shorter than the alternate route Belgrade-Nish-Skopije-Salonica-Ksanti-Istanbul.

More and more people from all over the world and particularly from Europe visit Bulgaria every year. Their number

has reached an annual of 200,000. Foreign travellers enjoy every facility, and travel and visa formalities have been simplified to the strictest minimum.

The network of new hotels, restaurants, mountain chalets and tourist rest homes has been rapidly expanding.

Along the roads and highways there are an adequate number of petrol stations, garages, repair shops, and other services which motorists will find convenient.

S O F I A

The Bulgarian capital is situated on the southern side of the Sofia Plain, formed by the Balkan Range and the Vitosha Mountain. Its southern suburbs spread to the foothills of the Vitosha and Lyulin mountains and the eastern — to the Isker River.

Sofia is on the crossroads between North and South, East and West, astride the international highway Belgrade-Sofia-Plovdiv-Istanbul.

The favourable geographical location of the Bulgarian capital, fertile plains, attractive highlands around and several mineral spas, known for their curative waters in the city itself and its vicinity, have helped the city grow into a flourishing economic, industrial, cultural and tourist centre.

Sofia accounts for one-tenth of the population of the country and for one-fifth of its industrial potential, and is the country's main centre of culture, science and art.

S I G H T S O F T H E T O W N

The «Georgi Dimitrov» Mausoleum

The white-stone monument in Deveti Septemvri Square has become a place of pilgrimage to all who cherish the memory of Georgi Dimitrov — the great son of the Bulgarian people.

Alexander Nevski Memorial

This fine church is in Alexander Nevski Square of the city. Built between 1904 and 1912 as a token of gratitude towards our Russian liberators. It is on cruciform foundations, with

numerous cupolas and gilded domes. A grand artistic monument both as regards its exterior and interior paintings, marbles and ornaments, the work of eminent Bulgarian and Russian artists.

St. Sophia Church

An old church of the 6th century, built on the highest elevation in the capital, in Alexander Nevski Square. A historical relic in original Roman-Byzantine style, with a nave, isles and transept from the early Christian days, which has given its name to the city.

In Ottoman times it was converted into a mosk. The delapidated building was restored in 1926.

St. George Church

The most ancient architectural monument in the capital, in the courtyard right behind the Balkan Hotel. The St. George Church is a two-storied rotunda with cupola. In Roman times it must originally have been some public building, then consecrated as a church in the 5th or 6th centuries. During the 16th century the Turks converted it into a mosk, building a minaret, later destroyed.

There are fragments of murals of the 11th and 13th centuries, discovered in three different layers. The greater part of the building is in a good state of preservation.

The Russian Church of St. Nicholas

At the corner of Rouski Blvd. and Benkovski Street. An exquisite tribute to Russian building and artistic talent. Built by famous Russian architects and artists, with exterior and interior ornaments and paintings in the style of the Novgorodsk iconographers' school.

The Church of St. Petka (Samardjiiska)

The little church deep in the ground in the centre of town near the Central Department Store has been preserved as a national monument of culture. It has only a nave, dating from

medieval times. There are three layers of super imposed murals, of which the first and second are of particular interest to students of Bulgarian medieval art.

Boyana Church

6 km south of Sofia in Boyana village. One of the most valuable architectural and artistic monuments in the country. It was built in three stages. Its 13th century murals are of world renown, reflecting the development of an art that is close to life, and indeed a forerunner of the Italian Renaissance.

Dragalevtsi Monastery (Our Lady of Vitosha)

Built in the 14th century, in the beech forest near the village of Dragalevtsi. Only the Chapel of the Virgin has remained of the original structure, now incorporated within the new church. Its murals of the 15th to the 16th centuries are valuable relics of art.

The Russian Monument

Built after our country's liberation in 1877-1878 in memory of the Liberator Tsar Alexander II. A four-sided 10 m high stone pyramid in a little garden at the intersection of the D. Blagoev, Tottleben and Skobelev Boulevards.

The Doctors' Monument

In the garden behind the «Vassil Kolarov» National Library. A pyramid of rough-hewn blocks of stone with the names of Russian medical personnel fallen in the Russo-Turkish war of Liberation in 1877-1878.

Monument of Our Liberators

In Rouski Boulevard, facing the House of Pyrlliament. The work of an Italian sculptor Zocchi, expressing the gratitude of the Bulgarian people to their Russian liberators. Built of solid polished granite, with bronze sculptures.

Monument to the Soviet Army

An impressive monument to the Soviet liberating army in the park just off Boulevard Rouski. An 8-metre high tripartite composition — Soviet warrior proclaiming the victory over fascism; Bulgarian workman; mother and child. At the entrance to the forecourt there are two sculptural groups with motives depicting the welcome given to the Soviet army in Bulgaria.

The Burial Mound in the Park of Freedom

A monument built over a crypt with the remains of fighters fallen in the struggle for national freedom. A sculptural composition with an obelisk in the centre high 14 m, in front of which stand the sculptured figures of a man and woman — partisan fighters proclaiming the day of freedom.

The Vassil Levski Monument

A modest monument rising at the intersection of «Volgograd» and «General Zaimov» Boulevards, built over the place of the gallows where the great fighter for national freedom and revolutionary, Vassil Levski, was hanged. A 13 m high granite pyramid on a stylish pedestal, dedicated to the great patriot.

Ruins of the Old Fortress Wall

The city walls of Sofia were several times razed to the ground and built anew through the passage of times. Two fortress towers have been preserved to this day in the centre of the city: the round tower in «Serdica» and «Isker» streets with thresholds and passages towards the interior, and the triangular tower in «G. Dimitrov» Blvd. and «Exarch Yosif» Street — probably built in the 6th century to protect the Northern Gate of the city.

The Old Wall

Part of a wall in the Market Square off «Hristo Smyrnenski» Blvd. in the «Lozenets» quarter. Typical Turkish masonry work, probably a sepulchral structure of some Turk during the early days of Ottoman rule.

MUSEUMS

The Archaeological Museum

In the one-time «Büyükdjami» in Legué Street; the biggest mosk of the times in Sofia. An interesting achievement of Moslem architecture. The Archaeological Museum has five sections: prehistoric, antique, early medieval, late medieval and numismatic.

The Ethnographic Museum and the National Art Gallery

Now in the former Royal Palace in Deveti Septemvri Square. In Ottoman days it was the residence of the Turkish Beylerbey, and after liberation it was reconstructed into a palace for Bulgarian royalty. The museum has two main departments for «Folk Art and Costumes» and «Bulgarian Life and Crafts», with some 30,000 exhibits.

The National Gallery of Art has a valuable collection of paintings, sculptures and graphic works.

The Natural Science Museum

At the corner of Rouski Blvd. and Benkovski Street. Its 28 halls and 6 vestibules have a collection of over 1,000,000 items — minerals, rocks, ores, bones of the huge mammoth, birds, mammals, reptiles and insects. This is the richest collection of its kind in the Balkan Peninsula.

Museum of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Movement

14, Rouski Blvd. Photographs, documents and diagrams reflecting the development of the workers' and revolutionary movement in our country.

Museum of Bulgarian-Russian Friendship

23, Skobelev Boulevard. Displays, archives and illustrations showing the action taken in common by Bulgarians and Russians against foreign oppression. The museum has a gallery of pictures on military subjects. In the courtyard cannons of different epochs.

Dimiter Blagoev's House-Museum

The house where the founder of the Bulgarian Communist Party lived between 1905 and 1925 has been preserved as a museum. It is in 34, Lajos Kossut Street, and shows the life-work of this great son of the Bulgarian people.

Georgi Dimitrov's House-Museum

The house in 66, Opulchenska Street, where the Hero of Leipzig lived between 1888 and 1923.

Vassil Kolarov's Museum

At 5, Assen Zlatarev Street, showing the lifework of Georgi Dimitrov's closest collaborator.

Alexander Stamboliski's House-Museum

To the north-west of the Hristo Smyrnenski Park, in 44, Souhodol Street, where the agrarian leader and Prime Minister lived between 1921 and 1923. A vivid account of Alexander Stamboliski's lifework until the day of his tragic death.

Ivan Vazov's Museum

At 10, Ivan Vazov Street, where the greatest Bulgarian writer lived between 1893 and 1921.

The Museum of Petko and Pencho Slaveikov

At 138, Rakovski Street, showing the lifework of the two eminent Bulgarian poets of the post-liberation period.

Nikola Vaptsarov's Museum

At 37, Anghel Kunchev Street, on the 4th floor, where the great proletarian poet lived between 1940 and March 1942, when he was arrested and sentenced to death by the fascist regime.

Hristo Smyrnenski's Museum

At 116, Emil Shekerdjiski Street. The home where the inspired poet of the Bulgarian working class lived until the last day of his young life.

EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Sofia State University

A monumental building occupying a whole block in Rouski and Tolboukhin Boulevards. 324 rooms, of which 65 are large auditoriums. The University Library in the courtyard has a stock of about 500,000 volumes.

The Nikolai Pavlovich Academy of Art

Corner of Tolboukhin Blvd. and Shipka Street. With departments — for fine, decorative arts, and sculpture.

The Bulgarian State Academy of Music

Occupies several buildings at 1, 2, and 3, Benkovski Street and 13, Moskovska Street. The Academy has a middle and a higher course.

The «Krustiu Sarafov» Academy of Dramatic Art

108, Rakovski Street. A five-storied building, with a theatre, where the Academy stages plays open to the public.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS, MINISTRIES, PARKS, ETC.

The «Vassil Kolarov» National Library

At 11, Tolboukhin Blvd. A monumental building in modernised classical style. A public reading room seating 258, and 4 for specialised scientific reading rooms. A stock of over 600,000 volumes. The library accommodates the «Elin Pelin» Bibliographical Institute.

Town Library,
1, Gourko St.

Radio Sofia

At 4, Dragan Tsankov Blvd. Tel. 7-21-01.

Parliament

Narodno Sobranie Square. Built in 1884, with two later expansions.

The Party Centre

In the centre of the city. Seat of the Central Committee and the Sofia Town Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. A monumental block with a high tower. An achievement of Bulgarian architects and builders. Faced with granite and Vratsa white stone. Built in the period 1950-1955.

The Council of Ministers

A building of impressive dimensions forming part of the city «Centre», joined with the Central Department Store.

The Central Department Store

Corner of G. Dimitrov Blvd. and Lenin Square. A big 4 storied building. On the 4th floor a restaurant with a terrace.

The Law Courts

One of the grandest edifices in the capital, with a remarkable interior decorative scheme. Occupies a whole block between Vitosha Blvd. and Alabin, Positano and Lavele Streets. Built by Bulgarian architects. A tribute to our native building art.

The Bulgarian National Bank

At Deveti Septemvri Square. Built in 1939 in a «National Revival» style, with a stylish interior scheme.

The Post Office

A block with main entrance in Levski Street, accommodating all postal and telegraph services.

The Telephone Exchange

Facing the General Post Office in Levski and Gourko Streets. All administrative and technical services of the Sofia telephone exchange and trunk lines.

Ministry of Agriculture

A monumental baroque building in Hristo Botev Blvd. There are sixty one institutes for scientific research and experimental stations the activities of which are guided by the Bulgarian Academy of Science, 50 state farms and 700 cooperative farms fall under the Ministry of Agriculture.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1, Slavianska Street.

Ministry of the Interior

A large modern building between Shesti Septemvri, Gourko and Parensov Streets.

Ministry of Justice

At the Law Courts.

Ministry of Education and Culture

18, A. Stamboliski Blvd. (near Lenin Square).

Ministry of Finance

Corner Rakovski and Slavianska Streets.

Ministry of Transport and Communications

Levski Streets (near the National Theatre).

Physical Culture House

A big modern building in Tolboukhin Blvd. Indoor swimming pool.

The Park of Freedom

Entrance at Orlov Most (Eagle's Bridge) in Lenin and Evlogi Georgiev Boulevards. Covering an area of 360 hectares, of which 70 with modern layout. The park has an alpineum, rosarium, open air swimming pool, open air cinema, theatre and stage for variety shows, orchestra pavilion. Also an observatory of the Bulgarian Academy of Science, the Television Tower, the Vassil Levski and Army stadiums, and tennis courts. Numerous busts of eminent Bulgarians. A lake with rowboats and restaurant, a pond with goldfish and water lilies. During the summer a library serves visitors to the park. There are frequent concerts during the season.

The City Garden

In the centre of town, south of Deveti Septemvri Square. The Georgi Dimitrov Mausoleum in the northern part and an exhibition hall to the south.

The Hristo Smyrnenski Park

In the western suburbs of the capital, to the left of the road to Bankya Spa. A new park covering an area of 170 hectares, of which 50 developed. Tennis, basketball and volleyball courts; an amusements centre, shooting galleries, open air cinema and theatre, concert platform, playgrounds for children with swings, chutes, etc.

The Republika Swimming Pool

In the Park of Freedom right behind the cycle-racing track. Modern architecture in the attractive pine forest. There are four swimming pools, a diving tower, heating plant for the water, volleyball and basketball courts, and a restaurant with two terraces catering for 1000 diners.

The Zoo

When first built in 1888, it was out of the city bounds. It is now in 15, Tolboukhin Blvd, laid out in a park with 3,800 animals of 182 different species.

The Vassil Levski Stadium

Near the entrance to the Park of Freedom. The biggest sports stadium in the country, seating 45,000. A football field, track, jumping pits etc. for international athletic meets. Indoor gymnasium, training rooms; halls for wrestling, fencing, etc.

The Sports Stadium

South of the Vassil Levski Stadium. A special stadium for basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, boxing, wrestling and ice hockey — seating 6000.

The Cycle-Racing Track

In the Park of Freedom between the open air swimming pools and the Central Army Club Stadium. Concrete track and stands for 8,000.

Ivan Vazov National Theatre

A stylish building in late-classic lines at the eastern side of the City Garden. Built in 1907. Destroyed by fire in 1923 and restored in its present form in 1929. Seating 1,150. Tel. 7-48-31.

The National Opera

A big building with colonnaded entrance in antique style. Forms part of the Agrarian Union's Club «Alexander Stamboliski». Seats 1280 and has the biggest stage in the country. Tel. 7-70-11.

The People Youth's Theatre

36, Donduokov Street. Tel. 8-13-56.

«Stefan Makedonski» State Operetta Theatre

4, Volgograd Blvd. Tel. 4-23-21 .

The Satire Theatre

125, Rakovski Street. Tel. 8-46-12.

The «Bulgaria» Concert Hall

3, Aksakov, Street. Tel. 7-15-88.

The Summer Theatre

In the Park of Freedom, near the Pioneer Palace. Seats 3,200. Tel. 6-13-88.

Cinemas

D. BLAGOEV 35, Alabin St. Tel. 7-07-07

G. DIMITROV — Vazrazhdane Square Tel. 7-11-84

T s. TSERKOVSKI — 26, G. Dimitrov Boul. Tel. 3-10-52

MLADA GWARDIA — 35, Vitosha Boul. Tel. 7-28-77

LEVSKI — 28, Gen. Vl. Zaimov Boul. Tel. 4-35-55

SEVASTOPOL — 35, Exarch Yosif St. Tel. 3-22-61

MOSKVA — 52, Alabin St. Tel. 7-31-78

OTDIH I KOULTOURA — 20, G. Dimitrov Boul. Tel. 3-20-48

OSVOBOZHDENIE — 106, G. Dimitrov Boul. Tel. 3-28-78

STUDENTSKI DOM — Narodno Sobranie Square Tel. 8-13-34

MAKEDONIA — 5, Zhdanov St. Tel. 7-41-81

SLAVEIKOV — 2, Slaveikov Square Tel. 8-02-42

AURA — 45, Stamboliski Boul. Tel. 2-16-11

SOLOUN — 20, Vassil Kolarov St. Tel. 8-05-79

KOULTOURA — 11, Slaveikov Square Tel. 7-95-66

VLAIKOVA — 11, Ivan Assen II St. Tel. 4-27-11

ASSEN ZLATAROV — 85, Hristo Botev Boul. Tel. 3-15-11

PETER BERON — 75, E. Thälmann Boul. Tel. 5-23-68

IVAN VAZOV — 47, Skobelev Boul. Tel. 5-22-16

RAKOVSKI — Varna St., Zaharna Fabrika Ward Tel. 2-33-61.
 KRASNO SELO — 25, Deveti Septemvri Boul. Krasno Selo
 Tel. 5-60-29
 KNYAZHEVO — 373, Deveti Septemvri Boul. Knyazhevo
 Tel. 5-70-85
 S. PESHEV — 61, G. Dimitrov St., Nadeshda Ward Tel. 3-83-27
 AVRORA — Zaharna Fabrika Ward Tel. 2-17-14
 KIRIL I METODI — 64, St. Lepoev St. Krasna Polyana
 Tel. 2-24-19
 GORNA BANYA — Gorna Banya Tel. 5-77-66
 LYATNO KINO (Open air) — The Park of Freedom

Grand Hotel «Rila»

The biggest and deluxe hotel in the capital.

Grand Hotel «Balkan»

A «Balkantourist» representative hotel in the centre of the capital, with several reception and banqueting halls. 122 single rooms, and two and three-room suites. Tel. 7-65-41.

The «Bulgaria» Hotel

A modern hotel with one and two-room suites. Tel. 7-19-77

Slavianska Beseda Hotel — 127, Rakovska St. Tel. 8-36-91
 Vitosha Hotel — 9, Isker St. Tel. 8-01-11
 Moskva Hotel — 3, Triaditsa St. Tel. 7-65-86
 Sevastopol Hotel — 116, Rakovski St. Tel. 7-59-41
 Sredets Hotel — 2, Stamboliski Blvd. Tel. 7-45-21
 Kopitoto Hotel — Tel. 5-72-96
 (In the Vitosha Mountain, 20 km from Sofia)

T h e S o f i a M i n e r a l B a t h s

Built in the centre of the city, over a mineral water source which drew the first settlers in antiquity. The baths are in «National Revival» style, influence by old Bulgarian architecture. The water has a temperature of 46°C, and is prescribed with good effect for the treatment of rheumatic affections, gastro-intestinal disturbances, skin and renal diseases. The bath has a balneophysiotherapeutic polyclinic. For its interesting architectural style and colourful facade, the baths have been marked as a cultural monument.

B a n k y a S p a

A first rate mineral water resort at the foothills of Lyulin Mountain, only 18 kilometres west of Sofia, 636 m. above sea level. A famous climatic and mineral water resort, prescribed for the treatment of nervous disturbances, chronic rheumatism of the muscles and joints, gastro-intestinal disorders. The resort has a modern balneosanatorium.

An asphalt road, and frequent buses and trains to Sofia.

O v c h a K o u p e l S p a

Mineral waters with a temperature of 36°C, 5 kilometres from the centre of Sofia, 590 m above sea level. It includes balneosanatorium, solarium, sections for mud-bath treatment and a polyclinic.

G o r n a B a n y a S p a

Some 9 km to the south-west from the centre of Sofia, 660 m above sea level. Frequent railway, bus and tramway connections. A mild continental climate. Its mineral water, with a temperature of 41°C, is known for its curative properties in the treatment of kidney and gastro-intestinal diseases.

K n y a z h e v o S p a

8 km west of Sofia, on the banks of the Vladaya stream. Starting point for hikes and outings in the Vitosha Mountain. Its water, with a temperature of 31°C, has good effect in the treatment of nervous affections. There is a tram line to Sofia.

P a n c h a r e v o

A little attractive village 14 km south-east of Sofia, on the left bank of the Isker River. A mild continental climate. A rapidly developing summer resort, with bus lines to the capital. Mineral waters with a temperature of 46°C. The bath is recommended for the treatment of rheumatic affections. The Isker River has been dammed at Pancharevo, and the artificial lake has become a favourite water sports centre, with facilities for rowing, sailing, scooter races, etc. The resort has a sanatorium for the treatment of tuberculosis of the bone and joint.

Tramway Lines

- No 1 Central RR Station—G. Dimitrov Boul.—Lenin Square.
— Vitosha Boul. — Ivan Vazov Ward.
- No 2 Orlandovtsi (cemetery) — Kozlodui St. — G. Dimitrov Boul. — Lenin Square — Gr. Ignatiev St. — Pioneer Children's Palace
- No 3 Poduene RR Station — Gen. V. Zaimov Blvd. — Dondoukov Blvd.— Halite Market — Zhdanov St. — Zaharna Fabrika Ward.
- No 4 Geo Milev Ward — Rouski Blvd. — Dondoukov Blvd. — Halite Market — Stamboliski Blvd. — Krasna Polyana Ward.
- No. 10 As above, with extension to end of Stamboliski Blvd. and the Western Housing Complex.
- No 5 Lenin Square — Deveti Septemvri Blvd. — Knyazhevo.
- No 6 Nadezhda Ward — Hristo Botev Blvd. — Lozenets
- No 7 Nadezhda Ward — Lenin Square — Ivan Vazov Ward.
- No 8 (Branching off No 5) Pavlovo — Boyana.
- No 9 Central RR Station — Lenin Square — Lozenets — Hladilnika

Bus and Coach Lines

Alexander Nevski Square — to Pancharevo and Kokalyane
Alexander Nevski Square — to Isker Station
Graf Ignatiev Bridge — to Durvenitsa

Pioneer Children's Palace — to Simeonovo
The Lozenets Ward — to the village of Dragalevtsi
Knyazhevo — to the village of Vladaya
Totleben Blvd., intersection
of Gorna Banya Road — to Gorna Banya Spa.
Zaharna Fabrika — to Filipovtsi, Bozhourishte and Bankya
Spa
Nadezhda Ward Bridge — to Ilentsi
Poduene RR Station — to Isker Station.

Trolleybus Lines

- No 1 — Inner Circle. Rouski Pametnik (Russian Monument) —
Central RR Station — Stochna Gara — State University (Rektorata), Rouski Pametnik.
No 2 — The Medical Institute — the Hadji Dimiter suburb.
No 4 — The National Theatre — the Iztok suburb.
No 5 — The Rouski Pametnik (Russian Monument) — the Iztok suburb.

The Vitosha Mountain

An oblong domed massif 20 kilometres long and 18 km broad, some 8 km from the capital. Since 1934 it has been preserved as a National Park, with a specially planned network of roads and mountain paths. Particularly during the summer season, nearly 100,000 hikers and tourists go to the Votisha Mountain on week-ends and holidays.

The Knyazhevo suburb is the most convenient starting point for all going to the mountain on foot. There is an attractive path leading past the Byalata Voda, Belite Brezi and Zlatnite Mostove — the most popular haunts for hikers. Knyazhevo-Byalata Voda-Zaslona lead to the chalets and rest homes of Momina Skala, Sredets, Tintyava, Rodina and Bor, and turning right — to the chalets of Planinets and Septemvri. There is a straight path to the modern Balkantourist Hotel and Restaurant at Kopitoto.

Another favourite route is by tram to the near by village of Boyana, and hence through the picturesque gorge of the Boyana River, past Momina Skala and the Boyana Waterfall, to the mountain chalets and rest homes. A road leading out of

Boyana to the right leads to Kopitoto. Another route, turning to the left, leads past the Boyana Lake to the Kamen Del chalet, or through Kikisha to Orlovo Gnezdo, Kóminite and the upper terminus of the ropeway above the village of Dragalevtsi, in the Bai Krustiu locality.

Dragalevtsi is the most convenient starting point for an excursion to the Aleko chalet and Cherni Vruh peak on the Vitosha (2286 m), and its observatory.

Another attractive road leads through the village of Raiko Daskalovo (Vladaya), along the banks of the stream, to the Zlatni Mostove hotel and restaurant.

There are two fine automobile roads. The one through Boyana and Byalata Voda to Zlatnite Mostove, forking off near the Planinets chalet for the Balkantourist restaurant at Kopitoto. The road is part asphalted and part stone-paved. The other road leads from Dragalevtsi to the Aleko chalet, and hence to the foot of Cherni Vruh peak.

In the central part of the mountain, at an altitude between 1,500 and 1,700 metres, there are numerous holiday and rest homes, over 30 chalets, and two big Balkantourist restaurants, at Zlatnite Mostove and Kopitoto. The modern Balkantourist hotel at Kopitoto is open all the year round — for a good summer rest, skiing in winter, mountaineering, etc.

Streams flowing deep under the moraines are a specific feature of the Vitosha Mountain, the most picturesque «stone river» being the one at the Zlatnite Mostove (Golden Bridges). On the southern slope of the mountain the deep cave near the village of Bosnak is famous for its «Living Water» — a fountain, whose water runs at regular intervals during the season.

The Vitosha Mountain is fast developing into a modern skiing centre, with perfect accommodation and service at the most attractive skiing grounds.

TOURIST ROUTES

**Sofia—Zlatitsa—Pirdop—Klisoura—Vazovgrad—
Karlovo—Kalofer—Kazanluk—Sliven—Karnobat—
Bourgas over the Sub-Balkan railway or highway**

This route leads through the mountain dales and valleys formed by the southern slopes of the Balkan Range and the Sredna Gora Mountain — an almost straight line between Sofia and Bourgas.

The railway line goes past the building site of what will become the biggest centre of our ore-mining industry — the Kremikovtsi Metallurgical Works; then tunnels under the Gulubets ridge to reach Zlatitsa, and on to Pirdop, past the new Georgi Damyanov Copper Works.

At Zlatitsa a road turns south across the Sredna Gora range, towards the town of Pazardjik. Panagyurishte is on the same road, 34 km from Zlatitsa on the southern slopes of the mountain about 540 metres above sea level, in the attractive valley of the Louda Yana River.

Panagyurishte made a name in history in the days of the famous April Uprising against Ottoman rule, in 1876.

Carpet-weaving has long-standing traditions. Today skilled craftsmen in their co-operative workshops produce the world-famous hand-made Persian type carpets.

The town is a terminus of the Plovdiv-Panagyurishte RR line, and is 37 km by road from Koprivshtitsa and 43 km from Pazardjik.

The Panagyurishte Spa. (Buta Banya). Eight kilometres southwest of Panagyurishte, by road. A modern watering place, with hotels and restaurants. The temperatures of the different sources range between 29 and 44°C, effective in the treatment of gastric catarrhs and rheumatic affections. There is a regular coach line with the town and Pazardjik.

Strelcha Spa. Fourteen km east of Panagyurishte by road, on the RR line Plovdiv-Panagyurishte. Water temperature 40°C. Coach service to Plovdiv.

Pirdop (5,551 inhabitants). On the Sub-Balkan railway line. Centre for the production of the famous Balkan Kashkaval-yellow cheese. School for dairy farming. Coach lines to Koprivshtitsa and Panagyurishte.

Koprivshtitsa (3,164 inhabitants). Sheltered in the folds of the Sredna Gora range, 10 km south of Koprivshtitsa RR Station, with a regular bus service to the town. The road climbs up the mountain massif to a height of 960 m above sea level. 107 km from Sofia by road. A highland resort, with a surrounding pine forest.

Koprivshtitsa has retained the traditional aspect of the National Revival days. It has become a museum-town because of its old Bulgarian architecture, culture and revolutionary past.

Koprivshtitsa fired the first shot in the April Uprising of 1876 against Ottoman rule. Over 100 interesting houses and historic relics speak for its glorious past.

The Valley of Roses

Near Koprivshtitsa Station the train plunges into the longest tunnel in the Balkans, to emerge again at the town of Klisoura in the Valley of Roses.

Five little towns and scores of villages form the centre of the rose oil industry in the Valley.

Klisoura. (2,267 inhabitants). A little town east of the Koznitsa heights on the banks of the Strema River. On the Sub-Balkan railway, where the line forms an «8» around the town, as it climbs up several tunnels and over two big bridges.

The citizens of Klisoura took an active part in the April Uprising of 1876. It was at Zli-dol (east of Klisoura) that they used the famous «cherry tree cannon» against the Turks. A reading room preserved from its revolutionary history, is a museum. A mineral spring near the town. Starting point for excursions to Mt. Vezhen (2198) in the Balkan range and Mt. Bogdan (1,604 m) in the Sredna Gora.

Vazovgrad. (5,121 inhabitants). Some 29 km from Klisoura. Cobble-stoned old streets and houses with picturesque flower gardens. Fountain brooks and numerous fountains gurgling in the streets. Home town of our national poet Ivan Vazov (his house now preserved as a museum), with a monument dedicated to him. Factory for essential oils. A road over the Troyan pass leads into North Bulgaria. 58 km from Troyan and 91 km from Lovech.

Karlovo. (12,663 inhabitants). Four km east of Vazovgrad and 143 km from Sofia. On the Sub-Balkan RR line and terminus of the Plovdiv-Karlovo RR line (58 km by road). Situated on the wood covered southern slopes of the Balkan Mountains. Garden flowers, old vines and clear brooks running in through the courtyards.

Birthplace of the great Bulgarian patriot, revolutionary, and fighter for national liberation, Vassil Levski (his father's house preserved as a museum). A municipal museum and many old houses in typical Bulgarian architectural style.

The near-by villages of Rosino and Bogdan have the biggest rose gardens and distilleries. Near Karlovo there is a nursery and experimental field for aromatic industrial plants. Here too is the home of the famous «Karlovski Misket» wine.

The high Suchurum waterfall is just outside the town (1 km).

Karlovo is a convenient starting point for outings to the Troyan Monastery and Mt. Botev, highest on the Balkan Range (2376 m).

TRAVEL FACILITIES

Hotels: «Sofia» — July 20 Square, Tel. 134; «Republika» — Vassil Levski St., Tel. 216.

Restaurants: «Moskva» — July 20 Square, Tel. 164; the Suchurum Park restaurant.

Transport: Petrol station — Balabanov Most St. Tel. 178. Motor car repairs — Vassil Kolarov St. Tel. 98.

Museums. National Museum — in the building of the Otets Paissi school; the house-museum of Vassil Levski — Gen. Kartsev St.

Karlovo Spa. (Banya). Eleven kilometres south of Karlovo, on the Plovdiv-Karlovo RR line. Two new bath houses with mineral water pools and big balneosanatorium. Water temperature 47°C. Hotel and restaurant right by the balneological establishments. A regular coach service to Karlovo, Plovdiv (47 km) and Troyan (76 km).

Kalofer (4,895 inhabitants). Seventeen km east of Karlovo, on the banks of the Toundja River, at the foothills of the Balkan Range. Old town of the National Revival era. Handicrafts — workshops for leather garments. Birthplace of the immortal Bulgarian poet and revolutionary, Hristo Botev. A Botev Museum and monument. Convenient starting point for excursions to Mt. Botev, highest on the Balkan Range (2,376 m), or to the «Kalofersko Pruskalo» — highest waterfall in the country.

Pavel Banya Spa. Twenty-five km from Kalofer, 24 km from Kazanluk and 9 km from the Gorno Sahrane RR Station. Six mineral water springs, of which one with a temperature

of 54.6°C. One of the biggest balneological establishments in Bulgaria with carbonaceous and other waters and mud baths. The balneosanatorium is recommended for gynecological affections and disturbances of the vasomotor system.

Kazanluk (30,934 inhabitants). 39 km from Kalofer and 200 km from Sofia, on the Sub-Balkan RR line. Intersection of the highways Sofia-Bourgas and Stara Zagora-Gabrovo over the Shipka Pass. Main administrative and commercial centre of the Kazanluk valley, known for its roses, orchards and vineyards.

In the vicinity — a unique archaeological find in Europe — the famous Thracian Tomb of Kazanluk, a rare treasure of antique art dated to the 4th century B.C.

Only 7 km from the town is the «Georgi Dimitrov» dam, its 9-kilometre long lake being a favourite haunt for anglers and tourists. Mineral baths — 5 km from the town.

Kazanluk is the best starting point for outings to the Shipka Monastery (12 km), Mt. Stoletov (25 km), Mt. Buzludja (a 4-hour walk), and other points of interest in the Balkan Range.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: «Balkan», 8, Svoboda Square, Tel. 14-05

R e s t a u r a n t s: «Balkan», 8, Svoboda Square, Tel. 14-04;
«Moskva», 14, Svoboda Square, Tel. 20-20.

T h e a t r e: «Iskra» 15, Iskra St., Tel. 26-96

M u s e u m: The «Iskra» National Museum, 15, Iskra St.,
Tel. 12-62.

T r a n s p o r t: Petrol station in 54, Marshal Tolboukhin St.,
Tel. 13-69.

M o t o r c a r a n d c o a c h s t a t i o n: 10, Dondoukov St.
Tel. 13-75.

M o t o r c a r r e p a i r s: 27, San Stefano St., Tel. 16-42.

Sliven (46,175 inhabitants). 91 km east of Kazanluk, on the Sub-Balkan RR line Sofia-Bourgas. Road junction for Kazanluk-Sliven-Karnobat, Yambol-Elena-Gorna Oryahovitsa, and Nova Zagora-Kotel. A major industrial centre, mainly woollen textiles. New textile mills, an electric bulb factory, machine-building plant for the textile industry.

Birth place of many Bulgarian revolutionaries.

The dented ridges of the Balkan Range, rising behind the outskirts of the town are known as the «Blue Stones» because of their attractive hues, changing as they follow the path of the sun. A climb to the top opens magnificent views of the Tundja River plain.

The Sliven Spa. 12 km south-west of the town, on the Nova Zagora road with a good hotel and modern balneosanatorium. Temperature of the water 43.8°C. Regular trolleybus service to Sliven.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: «Sinite Kamuni» — in the Red Square, Tel. 634; «Zora» — 1, Mitropolit Serafim St. Tel. 147.

R e s t a u r a n t s: «Zora» — 1, Mitropolit Serafim St., Tel. 140; «Moskva» — Tel. 388; «Chaika» — in the Red Square, Tel. 411.

T h e a t r e: National Theatre, 1, Mitropolit Serafim St., Tel. 276.

M u s e u m: National Museum — Tel. 261; The Hadji Dimite Museum, 2, Assenovska St.

T r a n s p o r t: Petrol station — 41, D. Pehlivanov St., Tel. 241; Motor car repairs — 86, Assenovska St., Tel. 508.

Kotel (5,881 inhabitants). 54 kilometres by road, north of Sliven. A highland resort 527 m above sea level. Old houses preserved from the National Revival epoch. The birth place of eminent Bulgarian patriots and cultural leaders.

In the near-by village of Zheravna the house of the famous Bulgarian writer Yordan Yovkov has been turned into a museum.

Karnobat (14,516 inhabitants). Junction on the railway lines to Bourgas, Varna, and Kolarovgrad; 57 km by road, east of Sliven. 101 km by road to Kolarovgrad. The region raises the Karnobat fine-fleeced sheep, and makes the famous Sungurlare wine.

Aitos (13,914 inhabitants). 23 km east of Karnobat on the road to Bourgas. On the Sofia-Plovdiv-Bourgas RR line.

Road communication to the north across the Balkan Range with the town of Provadiya (82 km).

The marble quarries in the vicinity of the town produce the green Aitos stone (andesite), a valuable facing material used in the building industry.

A petrol station.

Direct rail and road communication with the Port of Bourgas on the Black Sea coast.

Sofia—Pazardjik—Plovdiv—Stara Zagora—Yambol—Bourgas

(by the Southern Railway, or road.)

The Sofia-Plovdiv stretch is over the International Highway and railroad (Belgrade-Sofia-Plovdiv-Istanbul).

Ihtiman (9,063 inhabitants). 56 km east of Sofia by road. Site of a settlement in Roman times. A museum of the Bulgarian workers' revolutionary movement.

On the Sofia-Plovdiv RR line; coach line to the Topolnitsa irrigation dam, the town of Samokov, and Kostenets RR Station.

Momin Prohod. A balneological centre 3 km by road from Ihtiman. Radioactive mineral waters. Temperature of the water 64.5°C. The biggest balneosanatorium in the Balkans, with a special inhalatorium. Specialised electro-, ray- and mud therapy.

Kostenets RR Station 17 km east of Ihtiman by road. Lively traffic by road to the highland resorts of Georgi Dimitrov (former Kostenets), Dolna Banya and Pchelin. A safety-match and paper factory.

Georgi Dimitrov Resort (Kostenets Villas). 7 km south of the Kostenets Station, at an altitude of 835 m above sea level in the Rila Mountain. A highland and mineral water resort with good hotels and restaurants. Starting point for outings to the Vassil Kolarov (Belmeken) peak and chalet over a picturesque gorge. A four-hour walk to the chalet, near the Ravnichalsko Lake.

Dolna Banya

Pchelin. A watering place 8 km by road, north-west of Kostenets Station. Baths with pool, hotels and restaurants.

After Kostenets Station the railway and road run along the banks of the Maritsa River, and on through the Momin Prohod Pass to Sestrimo Station.

From Sestrimo one can visit the Chaira highland resort, 15 km distant from the station, in an attractive hollow (1200 m above sea level).

There are several holiday homes, hunting lodges and anglers' cottages, accessible over a good mountain road.

Belovo Station. 35 km east from Ihtiman. A paper factory. A popular resort with swimming pool, mineral waters and modern Balkantourist camping site.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l — facing the station, Tel. 2;

R e s t a u r a n t «Yundola» in the village Square, Tel. 2.

P e t r o l s t a t i o n in Cherkovna St., Tel. 23.

A u t o m o b i l e r e p a i r s h o p — 10, Yundolska St.

A 26 km road along the valley of the Yadenitsa River leads to the Rila—Rhodope highland resort of Yundola (1375 m above sea level). Sunny clearing in a fine pine forest. Numerous rest and holiday homes, modern villas and hotel-restaurant.

Yundola is a leading Bulgarian highland resort, and a convenient starting point to the Vassil Kolarov peak in the Rila Mountains, or for outings to the attractive Pashovi Skali (Rocks).

From Belovo Station the railway and road descend to the fertile Thracian Plain.

Pazardjik (39,499 inhabitants). 121 km from Sofia and 35 km from Plovdiv. An old Bulgarian town, which flourished particularly during the 16th and 17th centuries.

The Church of St. Mary, built into the ground in 1837 is known for its woodcarved iconostasis, ornamented with floral motives and human figures — an artistic creation of masters of the Debur School of Woodcarving.

The «Stanislav Dospevski» Museum shows the works of the eminent Bulgarian artist of the National Revival epoch.

In our present times Pazardjik is a major centre of viticulture

and of the hemp, rice and rubber industries. There is an accumulators plant and factories for cotton and linen fabrics, rubber goods, rice husking plants, vegetable and fruit canneries. Good communications with the towns of Velingrad, Peshtera and Panagyurishte.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l: «Moskva» — 41, Deveti Septemvri St., Tel. 30-17;

R e s t a u r a n t s: «Bulgaria», Deveti Septemvri Square, Tel. 23-73
«Volga», Red Square, Tel. 23-74; «Republika» — Orange Square. Tel. 23-78.

M u s e u m s: the National Museum, 5, Assen Zlatarev St. Tel. 25-45; the Stanislav Dospevski Museum, 36, Georgi Dimitrov St., Tel. 20-30.

T r a n s p o r t: Petrol station — 17, Rouski Boulevard, Tel. 33-02; Motor car repairs — Tel. 23-85.

Krichim Station 19 km from Pazardjik and 16 km from Plovdiv. A main centre of the canning industry.

The village of Peroushtitsa, about 9 kilometres from Krichim Station, gained prominence during the April Uprising of 1876. It was set on fire by the Turkish bashi-bazouks and its people massacred. An ossuary in the memorial church is a tribute to its heroic citizens. Peroushtitsa has one of the best stadiums built in the Bulgarian countryside.

A medieval fortress once crowned the heights around. The Red Church, some 6 km from the town, built of red bricks on the site where a pagan temple stood is an object of considerable archaeological interest.

Plovdiv (162,518 inhabitants). 156 km by road and rail, south-east of Sofia. Picturesquely located along the banks of the Maritsa river and the five syenite hills rising sharply out of the Thracian Plain.

The old part of the ancient Philippopolis of Philip of Macedonia and Trimontium in Roman times is being preserved for its historical significance. This includes about 80 houses made by famous master-masons, woodcarvers and painters of the National Revival epoch.

The Hlissar Kapiya gate graced the citadel in ancient days. The tall minaret still rises over the Djumaya Djamiya at Alexander Stamboliski Square. A Thracian cupola sepulchral tomb has been discovered near Filipovo Station in a large burial mound.

A monument dedicated to the Soviet liberating army has been built on Liberators' Hill (former Bunardjik). There is a Balkantourist restaurant on one of the terraces in the park on the hill, with a fine panorama of the city and the countryside around.

Plovdiv is an important commercial centre. The Plovdiv International Fair is held there every other year in a little Fair City built for the purpose.

It is the second cultural and educational centre in the country, after the capital of Sofia, with several higher educational institutions, technical colleges, National Library, Musical School, Symphony Orchestra, National Theatre, National Opera and a Puppet Theatre.

The collection of the local Archaeological Museum contains the world famous Panagyurishte treasure trove of old Thracian wine jugs (rhytons) of solid gold, with elaborate ornamentations in relief, weighing 6 kg and 169 grams.

Foreign travellers always make a point of visiting the house where the French poet Lamartine lived and worked in 1833, now preserved as a museum.

The Trimontium Hotel, restaurant and tea-rooms, built by Balkantourist in the centre of the town is always a pleasant surprise because of its original architectural style, garden, dancing and modern comfort. It has 160 rooms with bath, and suites, meeting rooms, lounges and banqueting halls. The rooms and terraces have a fine view of the city.

A new Balkantourist hotel is in construction.

Plovdiv is the main railway and road junction in South Bulgaria, with direct communications to Svilengrad (Turkish frontier), Bourgas, Karlovo, Hissar Spa and its famous Momina Banya bath, Panagyurishte, Peshtera, Assenovgrad. Also for the airline Sofia-Plovdiv-Stara Zagora-Bourgas. Plovdiv-Sofia is 24 minutes by air and Plovdiv-Bourgas — 43 minutes.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Trimontium (deluxe) — 2, Capitan Raicho St., Tel. 55-61 (to 65); Balkantourist (1st class) — 39, Vassil Kolarov St., Tel. 30-69; Volgograd (first class) — 3, Edinadeseti Avgust St., Tel. 43-32; Bulgaria (first class) — 15, Patriarch Eftimi St., Tel. 43-63; Astoria (second class) — 5, Patriarch Eftimi St., Tel. 44-85; KOOP (second class) — 1, Zhelezarska St., Tel. 47-62; Thrakia (third class) — 84, Ivan Vazov St., Tel. 26-33.

R e s t a u r a n t s: Trimontium—deluxe, with orchestra, dancing, summer garden — 2, Capitan Raicho St. Tel. 55-61; Moskva-Bulgaria — first category, with orchestra, dancing, and summer garden — 31, Vassil Kolarov St., Tel. 24-42 and 23-65; Republika (former Mollé) — first category, with orchestra, dancing and summer garden — 39, Vassil Kolarov St., Tel. 21-33; Ezeroto (Lake) restaurant in the Park of Freedom, with dancing. Tel. 45-67; Hulma na Osvoboditelite (Liberators' Hill) open air restaurant — first category, orchestra and dancing, Tel. 35-60.

THEATRES

National Theatre — 34, Vassil Kolarov St., Tel. 49-10
National Opera — 34, Vassil Kolarov St., Tel. 49-10
Puppet Theatre — 14, General V. Zaimov St.,
Summer Theatre — Liberators' Hill (north-west side) Tel. 38-38
The State Concert Bureau — 7, Patriarch Eftimi St., Tel. 28-55.

MUSEUMS

National Archaeological — 1, Suedinenie Square, Tel. 43-39
National Ethnographic — 2, Dr. S. Chomakov St., Tel. 42-60
Revolutionary Movement — 14, A. Boukoureshliev St., Tel. 20-14
Socialist Construction — 47, Ivan Vazov St., Tel. 25-76
Natural Science — 34, Gen. V. Zaimov St., Tel. 30-96
A. Boukoureshliev's House — 7, Capitan Raicho St., Tel. 22-69
Alphonse de Lamartine — 19, Kniaz Tseretelev St.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND OTHERS

The National Art Gallery — 15, V. Kolarov St., Tel. 42-20

The «Ivan Vazov» National Library — 1, Suedinenie Sq., Tel. 43-39

The Post Office — Tsentralen Square, Tel. 32-17

The Bulgarian National Bank — 51, R. Daskalov St., Tel. 34-41

The Customs House — the Central Plovdiv RR Station, Tel. 34-10

CONSULATES

French Consulate — 9, Lilyana Dimitrova St., Tel. 24-94

Turkish Consulate — 32, N. Vaptsarov St., Tel. 20-49

TRANSPORT

Plovdiv Central RR Station (information) — Tel. 27-29

Filipovo RR Station — Tel. 54-70

Central RR bureau — 35, Vassil Kolarov St., Tel. 27-32

RR bureau at Filipovo Station — 58, R. Daskalov St., Tel. 64-74

BALKANTOURIST Travel and Tourist Bureau — 39, Vassil Kolarov St., Tel. 39-68

TABSO Airways — 4, Gladstone St., Tel. 20-03

PLOVDIV AIRPORT — Tel. 20-31

TAXIS — Gladstone St., opposite the TABSO Airways, Tel. 39-81

Central RR Station, Tel. 64-97

Filipovo Station — Tel. 52-07

Motor transport service (for all district bus and coach lines)—corner Botev Blvd. and Odrin St., near the RR Station Tel. 61-37, 27-04

Petrol Stations — 9, Iztochna Roumelia St., Tel. 25-89

111, Mao-Tse-Tung St., (north of the Plovdiv-Svilengrad road) Tel. 51-01

Near the grounds of the International Fair — Rogoshko Rd., Tel. 65-09

Auto-service — 32, Constantine Velichkov St., Tel. 42-98

Motor car repairs — Brezovsko Chaussée St., Tel. 26-44.

Chirpan (15,432 inhabitants). 51 km from Plovdiv, on the Stara Zagora road. On the Plovdiv-Bourgas RR line. A famous viticultural centre. Birthplace of the Bulgarian poet P. K. Yavorov, whose house is now a museum.

Good roads from Chirpan to Stara Zagora (36 km) and Maritsa (58 km).

TRAVEL FACILITIES

Hotel Moskva — 468, Kiril i Metodi Ward, Tel. 125.

Restaurant Moskva — Stantsionna St., Tel. 94.

Petrol Station — 438, Stantsionna St., Tel. 234.

Automobile repairs — 243, Vassil Levski St., Tel. 103.

The RR line to Stara Zagora runs past Mihailovo Junction, with a local line to Dimitrovgrad. Hotel and restaurant in the square facing the RR station.

Stara Zagora (56,177 inhabitants). 89 km east of Plovdiv. in a fertile plain of vineyards, orchards and wheat fields growing the famous «Zagarya» wheat. In 1877 the town witnessed the battle between the Russian liberating forces and the Bulgarian Volunteer Corps against the armies of Suleiman Pasha. Set on fire during the war, the town was rebuilt and modernised. It has straight broad streets and boulevards, new public buildings and spacious parks. A new, modern hotel of Balkan-tourist is in construction.

Stara Zagora has lately been developing into an important centre of industry.

The Lenin Park on the elevation above the town has a small Zoo

The restaurant on the lake along the boulevard leading to the railway station is another attractive corner.

Stara Zagora has an eventful revolutionary past.

It is a junction on the Plovdiv-Bourgas and Roussé-Stara Zagora RR lines. Near-by Toulovo Station is the link with the Sub-Balkan line. A road to the north leads through Kazanluk and the Shipka Pass to Gabrovo (81 km), and southwards to the town of Maritsa (58 km) and Svilengrad on the Turkish border (102 km).

By air: Stara Zagora-Plovdiv — 13 minutes;

Stara Zagora-Bourgas — 30 minutes.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Moskva — Tel. 23-03;

Thrakia — 11, Georgi Dimitrov Boulevard, Tel. 21-90

Geo Milev — 93, Gourko St., Tel. 26-05.

R e s t a u r a n t s: Republika — Tel. 24-55;

Moskva — Tel. 27-18;

The Lake — Tel. 34-00.

T h e a t r e s: National Theatre—Svobodata Square, Tel. 25-92

N a t i o n a l O p e r a — Tel. 25-92

M u s e u m s: District National Museum — Svobodata Square, Tel. 21-14;

The Geo Milev Museum — Geo Milev St., Tel. 34-50.

T r a n s p o r t: Taxis — 70, Deveti Septemvri Boulevard, Tel. 28-54;

Railway Bureau — Tel. 27-29;

TABSO Airways — Tel. 27-29;

Car repairs — 165, General Stoletov St., Tel. 28-45.

Stara Zagora Spa. 14 km north-west of the city, in the forested slopes of the Surnena Gora range (370 m above sea level). Temperature of the water 43°C. A new bath, a hotel, restaurant and private villas are built. Also a warm mineral water open-air pool and sand strips for solar treatment. Regular bus service to Stara Zagora.

Nova Zagora (14,913 inhabitants). 33 km east of Stara Zagora by road and rail. A rich agricultural region, growing cereals, cotton, grapes, etc. There is a factory for farming machinery and repair shop.

Directly connected by road and rail with the town of Maritsa (61 km) on the Plovdiv-Svilengrad line. First class highways to Svilengrad on the Turkish border (108 km) and Turnovo (95 km) over the Republika Pass. Another good road over the Tvurditsa Pass and the town of Elena leads to Gorna Oryahovitsa RR and road junction (102 km).

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l — Bulgaria — 2, Georgi Dimitrov St., Tel. 126;

R e s t a u r a n t — Moskva — 78, Georgi Dimitrov St., Tel. 118;

P e t r o l s t a t i o n — 27, S. Kondaka St., Tel. 254;

C a r r e p a i r s — 1, Preslavska St., Tel. 246.

Korten Spa. 14 km to the north of Nova Zagora, on the road to Elena, on the banks of the Toundja River near the village of Korten. Several mineral water springs with a temperature of 57°C. Hotel and restaurant. Regular bus line to Nova Zagora.

Yambol (42,333 inhabitants). 62 km from Nova Zagora by road. RR station. On the banks of the Toundja River, in a fertile plain.

Yambol is an important farming centre and has a mechanical engineering works, a ceramic factory, textile mills, cannery, vegetable oil refinery, rice husking plant, wine cellars, grain silos, etc.

Yambol has a museum, a National Theatre, amateur Operetta Company, a Puppet Theatre, Library and an Art Gallery.

There is a mineral bath with a water temperature 15.4°C.

There is a Tourist Club on Borovets Hill and a sports stadium near the banks of the river.

A pheasant breeding station in the near-by forest, a deer park and fishery.

A local RR line to the town of Elhovo.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Bulgaria — 10, D. Manolova St., Tel. 110;

Deveti Septemvri — 6, V. Karagyzov St., Tel. 109.

R e s t a u r a n t s: Bulgaria — 13, G. Drazhev St., Tel. 185;

Deveti Septemvri — 6, V. Karagyzov St.

P e t r o l S t a t i o n — 106, G. Dimitrov St., Tel. 107.

C a r r e p a i r s — 106, G. Dimitrov St., Tel. 107.

The railway leads eastwards to Zimnitsa Station which is a junction for the Sub-Balkan line Sofia-Karlovo-Sliven-Bourgas.

Pazardjik—Peshtera—Batak—Vassil Kolarov Dam (by road)

An asphalt road leads from Pazardjik to the town of Peshtera (17 km) and the village of Batak (33 km) — a picturesque drive in the northern foothills of the Rhodope Mountains.

There is also a railway line from Krichim Station to Peshtera.

Peshtera. 436 m above sea level in an attractive forested hollow in the Rhodope Mountains. Furniture making, manipulation of tobacco, viticulture and fruit growing.

A monument dedicated to the fighters fallen in the April Uprising and to the men of the «Anton Ivanov» partisan detachment. In the main square there is a shady plane tree said to be a thousand years old.

To the south-west of the town are the three «Ushatovi dupki» caves, and in its vicinity a 200 m high solid rock («Kupenut»).

There is a regular bus service to Batak; a petrol station and car repair shop on the road to Batak — 6, G. Dimitrov St., 111.

Eighteen kilometres north-west of the town, in the pine forest, is the «Anton Ivanov» highland resort, 900 m above sea level. The villas are in old Bulgarian style. The «Batak» dam is only a few minutes walk from the Anton Ivanov resort.

Bratsigovo. 7 km east of Peshtera by road. A mineral water bath and hotel. Strawberry gardens. A Culture Club and monument to the famous revolutionary Vassil Petleshkov (local leader in the April Uprising) who after the suppression of the uprising, was burnt alive by the Turks. Bratsigovo is on the Krichim-Peshtera RR line.

Batak. 26 km south of Peshtera over a road carved out of the rocks along the banks of the Stara Reka River. Famous in the past century for the Bulgarians massacred by the Turkish bashibazouks. More than 4,000 of the villagers were put to the sword.

and the village burned to the ground. There is a common ossuary for the victims of the Batak massacre and partisans of the «Anton Ivanov» partisan detachment at the local memorial church, dating from 1813.

Today Batak enjoys many modern amenities and has grown into a trim little highland town with a wood-processing industry, and co-operatives weaving the famous Persian type carpets for our export trade.

Batak is 1,036 m above sea level, near thick forests. The Rhodope Mountain peaks of Batashki Snezhnik (2082 m) and Semeralan are favourite tourist haunts, with dense fir and pine forests. It is both a summer and winter resort, with a first class hotel and restaurant.

Today Batak is rightly proud of the Batak hydro-electric power system — a huge undertaking with a series of water conservation systems, dams, canals, tunnels and power generating stations, which will supply power and water to the Thracian Plain below.

Vassil Kolarov Dam. The Vassil Kolarov Dam high up 1,600 m above sea level forms the first link of the Batak power generating system. It is near the Kamen Prohod pass (Tashboaz). A wide road over the crown of the dam leads to the village of Dospat. The lake of the dam covers an area of 18 sq. km, with numerous rest homes and summer camps along its banks.

The Batak power generating system will have an annual output of 612,000,000 kW/h.

From Batak there is a good road to the Rakitovo resort (24 km) and Velingrad Spa (27 km) in the Chepino Valley.

Pazardjik—Velingrad—Yakorouda—Razlog—Bansko— Dobrinishte

(by narrow-gauge line and road)

Velingrad. (18,240 inhabitants). The most highly frequented and modern spa in the Rhodope Mountain region, some 47 km south of Pazardjik, at an altitude of 790 m above sea level. Located in a forested hollow, surrounded by Syutkya, Alabak and Karkaria peaks and rich in mineral water sources and orchards. The resort has a total of 30 mineral water springs. Velyova Banya is the most famous bath in the town, using the waters of several sources, with a temperature between 30 and

44°C. The Ludjene Quarter has also the so-called flint bath, as well as carbonaceous and mud-baths. The water of the flint-bath has a temperature of 64°C, and is artificially cooled. It contains silicic acid, and is prescribed with good effect in the treatment of nervous disturbances. The carbonaceous water bath has an alkaline water, useful in the treatment of gastrointestinal, renal and liver affections. The mud-bath has pools with special mud, known for its curative properties, and a mineral water source with a temperature of 44.5°C. Effective in the treatment of rheumatism, neuritis, skin diseases, and others. Near the carbonaceous bath there is an open-air swimming pool with warm mineral water and sand for sun-bathing.

The Kamenitsa Quarter is known for its sulphur bath, with a water temperature of 71°C. Has a good therapeutic effect in the treatment of lumbago, sciatica, fractures of the bone and gynecological disturbances.

Museum dedicated to Vela Peyeva, fighter of the «Anton Ivanov» partisan detachment. The town has been named after her (Velingrad). Velingrad has the biggest woodprocessing enterprise in the country and the «Crystal» plant for colophoni, turpentine and linseed oil. Modern greenhouses grow vegetables early in the season. There are good roads to the near-by historical village of Batak (27 km), Yundola Resort (16 km) and other highland resorts in the Rhodope Mountains.

Yakoruda. (5,520 inhabitants). 40 km from Velingrad and 24 km from Yundola by road. On the RR line Septemvri-Velingrad-Dobrinishte. Yakoruda (900 m above sea level) has been rapidly developing into a first class highland resort, with a good hotel. Starting point for excursions into the eastern part of the Rila Mountain and the Atanas Yanchev and Boris Sotirov chalets.

Belitsa. Railroad station. The Yakorouda-Razlog main road passes near the village. The general aspect is that of a little town, with a new hotel and restaurant.

Semkovo. A highland resort on the southern slopes of the Rila Mountains, 1,650 m above sea level, 17 km from Belitsa. A new big hotel and restaurant, private villas and mountain

chalets in the forest. Starting point for hiking in the Rila Mountain and excursions to the Fish Lakes and the Rila Monastery.

Banya. Guliyna Banya 5 km from Razlog, with a modern new bath. The hot mineral water is used in greenhouses for the cultivation of early vegetables. The village has been turned into a pleasant little resort.

Razlog (8,652 inhabitants). 76 km from Belovo RR Station, and 70 km from Velingrad by road. Situated in the picturesque Razlog Valley (840 m above sea level), hemmed in by the Rila, Pirin and Rhodope mountains.

The town has an old revolutionary history, and it was here that the first partisan detachment was organized in 1941 by Nikola Parapounov.

Among other objects of interest: the Church of St. George, built in 1834 with a delicately carved wooden iconostasis; Nikola Parapounov's house is now a museum.

Razlog is a starting point for outings and excursions in the southern part of the Pirin Mountain, to the P. K. Yavorov Chalet, Vihren peak, the Rila Mountain, etc.

There is a well furnished Tourist Club.

The town is on the Septemvri-Dobtinishte narrow gauge line, and a road junction for Septemvri-Razlog-Gotse Delchev and Blagoevgrad-Razlog-Gotse Delchev. A daily bus service Blagoevgrad-Gotse Delchev in each direction.

Bansko (6,842 inhabitants). 6 km south of Razlog on the road to the town of Gotse-Delchev. Station on a narrow gauge line. The town spreads on the right bank of the Glazné River, at the foothills of the Pirin Mountain.

In the distant past its citizens had gained wealth from the sale of cotton, which they carried to the markets in Vienna, Budapest and Italy. There are interesting historical monuments from that epoch. Among them is the Trinity Church, with a fine woodcarved iconostasis, with a tall belfry in the church yard, and an old town clock.

Bansko is the home town of our eminent leaders of the National Revival period, the monk Otets Paisy and Neophyte Rilsky, and of the ardent poet and revolutionary, Nikola Vaptsarov. There is a monument dedicated to Vaptsarov and his home has been preserved as a museum.

Bansko is a starting point for excursions into the Pirin Mountains, particularly to Vihren peak and numerous mountain lakes and tourist chalets. It has a hotel and new Tourist Club. The Nikola Vaptsarov rest home (hotel and restaurant) is 4 km to the south, in a fine pine forest on the banks of the Damyaniitsa River.

The town is on the regular bus line Blagoevgrad-Gotse Delchev.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l: the «Vihren Hotel», Tel. 24.

R e s t a u r a n t: in the centre of town, Tel. 50.

M u s e u m: Nikola Vaptsarov's house, in the centre of town, Tel. 45.

T r a n s p o r t: petrol station — just outside The town, on the road to the village of Dobrinishte.

C a r R e p a i r s: in the centre of twon, Tel. 55.

Dobrinishte. A picturesque village 7 km east of Bansko, on the road to Gotse Delchev. Terminus of the narrow gauge line Septemvri-Velingrad-Dobrinishte. A highland and balneological resort. A modern mineral water bath; temperature of the water 42°C.

Plovdiv—Haskovo—Harmanli—Svilengrad

(by road)

The main International Highway London-Paris-Istanbul passes through Plovdiv-Haskovo-Svilengrad (on the Turkish border).

Haskovo (39,006 inhabitants) 79 km from Plovdiv. A station on the Dimitrovgrad-Kurdjali-Podkova line, with a parallel good road. Haskovo is the biggest tobacco growing and processing centre in the country. There are big warehouses and modern tobacco-processing plants. It is the home of the Djebel-Basma brand — one of the best and most aromatic sorts of Bulgarian tobacco. It is also a viticultural, silkworm breeding and tobacco-growing region, with silk and cotton factories.

Among the historical monuments one counts the Church of the Archangel Gabriel with fine woodcarvings, the Eski Djamia mosk, and other old buildings. A monument to Capitan Petko Voivoda at the outskirts of the town, and another in the city main square, dedicated to the war dead.

On the Yamacha Hill just out of town there is a Tourist Club with a restaurant, snack bar and cinema hall, a monument dedicated to the Haskovo citizens fallen in the fight against fascism, and Sports grounds with an open air swimming pool.

The famous «spring of the Nymphs» with a pool is on an elevation north-west of the town near the village of Klokotnitsa — scene of the great battle fought in 1230 between the Bulgarian King Ivan Assen II and the Byzantine Emperor Comnenes. Over the pool there is an arch with a Roman inscription.

The Haskovo Spa. 19 km west of the town by an asphalt road. A climatic and balneological centre 280 m above sea level. Temperature of the water 54 to 58°C, prescribed with good effect in the treatment of gynaecological and rheumatic affections, skin diseases, disturbances of the liver and the gastrointestinal tract.

The fact that these are the only waters in this country with a favourable effect in the treatment of Bürger's disease has lately aroused considerable interest. There is a new balneo-sanatorium and numerous rest homes, hotels and restaurants. A regular bus service from town.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Republika — 11, Otets Paissi St., Tel. 123

Rhodopi — 34, Svoboda Square, Tel. 440

Central — 4, Kubrat St., Tel. 433

R e s t a u r a n t s: Republika — 5, Otets Paissi St, Tel. 76

Moskva — 28, Svoboda Square, Tel. 100

T h e a t r e s: National Theatre — 18, Otets Paissi St., Tel. 602

Turkish Theatre — 7, Yanko Kozhouharov, St. Tel. 277

M u s e u m: National Museum — 16, Rouski Boulevard, Tel. 742

T r a n s p o r t: Motor transport station — 21, Svoboda Square, Tel. 69

Petrol station — 4, Rakovski St., Tel. 692

Car repairs — 6, Makedonia St., Tel. 526

Kurdjali (21,018 inhabitants) 55 km south of Haskovo by road. Centre of our mining industry and non-ferrous metallurgy. A tobacco growing region with warehouses for the manipulation of the well known Bohcha tobacco.

Among points of interest: the biggest in Bulgaria lead and zinc Works, and the Stouden Kladenets Dam on the Arda river, with a 28 km long lake, with motor boats between the settlements on its banks.

The railway line hugs the banks of the lake. Kurdjali is one of the main stations on the railway line Dimitrovgrad-Podkova. Roads to all highland towns in the district and across the frontier, to Greece.

Madan and Roudozem. New mining settlements, which have grown into important centres of our ore-mining industry. A regular coach service Kurdjali-Ardino-Madan-Roudozem. By rail: to Podkova Station and hence by road to Zlatograd-Madan.

Harmanli (12,577 inhabitants). 35 km from Haskovo. A station on the Plovdiv-Svilengrad railway line. Connected by road with Svilengrad-Topolovgrad-Maritsa-Kroumovgrad. Well developed silkworm breeding, silk and tobacco industries. Home of the aromatic Bulgarian tobacco brand Harmanliiska Yaka. A silk spinners' school. A fine stone arched bridge built by Sinan Pasha in 1585 over the Harmanli River.

Svilengrad (11,005 inhabitants). 145 km from Plovdiv and 301 km from Sofia. Border station on the Belgrade-Sofia-Istanbul railway line.

Svilengrad is the leading centre of the Bulgarian silk industry, with big mulberry tree gardens and modern spinneries.

The road to Istanbul passes over the fine old bridge over the Maritsa River, built in 1510 by the Turkish Grand Vizier, Mustafa Pasha.

Plovdiv—Purvomai—Dimitrovgrad—Maritsa

(by road and rail)

The railway line and road leading to the east of Plovdiv run across a prominent agricultural region of the country. Purvomai is one of the bigger stations before Dimitrovgrad — a rapidly developing little town.

Dimitrovgrad (38,389 inhabitants). 96 km from Plovdiv by road. A railway and road junction. A new city, which has grown into a major industrial centre since 1944. Built by Bulgarian youths on the banks of the Maritsa River, it has been rapidly developing into a modern socialist city, with blocks of flats enjoying every amenity, broad streets and boulevards, and spacious parks.

Marbas, the Maritsa coal basin to the north of the town supplies coal to the big industrial enterprises: the Vulcan Cement Works (biggest on the Balkans), the Chemical Fertilizer Works, the Asbestos-Cement Works, and others.

A junction for the railway lines and highways Sofia-Plovdiv-Svilengrad-Istanbul, and Stara Zagora-Haskovo-Podkova.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Moskva — facing the RR Station, Tel. 58

R e s t a u r a n t s: Balkantourist — facing the Station, Tel. 230

T h e a t r e s: National Theatre — Tel. 198

T r a n s p o r t: Taxi and bus station — square facing the People's Council Tel. 137

Petrol station — Tel. 397.

Maritsa (7,167 inhabitants). 22 km from Dimitrovgrad by road. Junction of the international railway lines and road communications Sofia-Istanbul. The town is picturesquely located on the hills along the banks of the Maritsa River, spanned by big bridges. Well developed silkworm breeding, tobacco and cotton industries.

There is a separate railway line linking the town with the main Sofia-Bourgas line near Nova Zagora Station. A country road connects Maritsa with the main highway Sofia-Istanbul near the town of Harmanli. Other roads lead to Nova Zagora running parallel with the railway line Stara Zagora and Dimitrovgrad. Maritsa-Harmanli is 13 km by road.

Plovdiv—Assenovgrad—Narechen Spa—Chepelare— Vassil Kolarov Rosort (by road)

A good road south of Plovdiv leads to several points of tourist interest in the central part of the Rhodope Mountains. This is the most convenient approach, along the banks of Chepelare River, climbing into the Rhodope Mountains by way of the Thracian Plain.

Assenovgrad (25,265 inhabitants) 19 km by road from Plovdiv, Terminus of the local Plovdiv-Assenovgrad line. The town spreads along the Assenitsa (Chaya) river. An important centre of the tobacco industry. Many old churches with finely carved wooden iconostases.

Just outside the town (1 km) on the rocky heights there is an old church and fortress dating from the reign of the Bulgarian king Ivan Assen II, today known as Assen's Fortress, which defended the pass of the road leading from the Aegean to the of Thracian Plain.

Further up in the gorge, some 12 km from Assenovgrad, is the famous **Bachkovo Monastery**, one of the most remarkable old monasteries after that of the Rila Monastery. It was founded in 1083. The chapel is a remarkable achievement of medieval building talent, built of hewn stone blocks in typical Byzantine style. Valuable works of clerical art; a library with very old editions and manuscripts. Murals reflecting the high level of development of old Bulgarian art. Among the murals one notices the portraits of the Georgian monk, Gregori Pakourian, and of the monastery patron, King Ivan Alexander.

A petrol station in the centre of the town.

Narechen Spa. 26 km from Assenovgrad and 45 km from Plovdiv, 620 m above sea level. A modern bath and several mineral

springs, known for the curative properties of their waters. One of these sources — the Salt Spring — with a water temperature of 23°C — holds first place in radioactivity on the Balkans. The main source furnishing water for the bath has a temperature of 31°C. The waters of Narechen Spa are known for their curative properties in the treatment of nervous disorders. They are also used with good effect in the treatment of chronic rheumatism, skin diseases, fractures, etc. Used as drinking water, it helps balance metabolism. At Narechen Spa there are several medical establishments, rest and holiday homes for people coming for a rest or water treatment.

There are regular bus services to Plovdiv, Assenovgrad and all other towns in the district.

A mountain road, forking off at the village of Hvoina, leads to the Er Kyupria chalet, at the foot of Golyam Persenk peak (2091 m), and the two famous natural bridges, which the Zabrudska River has carved out of the rock.

Chepelare (3802 inhabitants). A mountain resort 75 km from Plovdiv, 1140 m above sea level. A convenient base for tourism or skiing in the Rhodope Mountains.

Vassil Kolarov Resort (Pamporovo). 9 km from Chepelare and 84 km from Plovdiv. A highland resort at the foot of Murgavets peak (Karamandja) — 1858 m. The resort has spread over the highland plateau, with sunny clearing among the pinewoods (at an altitude of 1580 m above sea level). Holiday homes and villas enjoying every modern amenity.

The Vassil Kolarov Resort has been gaining increasing popularity as a skiing centre, with fine skiing grounds and four sites for downhill.

There is a big modern Balkantouris hotel.

Ustovo. A little town 28 km from Chepelare. Road junction between the towns of Smolyan, Madan and Assenovgrad.

Car repair shop.

Plovdiv—Hissar Spa

(by road and rail)

At Dolna Mahala Station on the Plovdiv-Karlovo line a railway line forks off towards one of the best known Bulgarian balneological centres, with the famous Momina Banya mineral water source and bath.

Hissar (Momina Banya Bath). Situated in the southern foothills of the Sredna Gora Mountain, 360 m above sea level, 42 km from Plovdiv over a fine asphalt road, and 25 km from Karlovo. Its mineral waters were famed in antiquity and it was a favourite haunt of Roman emperors and courtiers. In order to protect the settlement from Barbarian invasions, the Romans fortified it by a strong wall in the 2nd and 4th centuries. Part of the wall and the southern main gate called «the camel», on the road to Pazardjik, have been preserved to our days. The resort has a total of 16 mineral water sources, with waters differing in composition and curative properties; with temperatures running between 36 and 40°C.

The Momina Banya spring is the most famous of them all.

The waters of the Hissar Spa are prescribed in the treatment of gastro-intestinal and renal diseases and nervous disturbances, diseases of the respiratory and digestive tracts, skin diseases, chronic rheumatism, bronchitis, etc.

The Hissar Spa has developed into a modern balneological resort, with numerous sanatoriums, open all the year round.

There are four open air swimming pools with sand strips for sunray treatment.

There is an Archaeological Museum, and a summer theatre seating 2000 has been built near the old Roman wall.

Sofia—Mezdra—Pleven—Gorna Oryahovitsa—Kolarovgrad—Varna (by rail)

The railway line leading out of the capital to the north is one of the oldest arteries in the country — the Sofia-Varna line. A double line will soon be in exploitation in the sector between Sofia and Mezdra Junction. There is also a wide asphalt road from Sofia to Mezdra, whence one road turns northwards to Vratsa-Mihailovgrad-Vidin, while the main continues towards Pleven and Varna.

At Kurilo Station the railway line and road leave the Sofia Plain and follow the banks of the Isker River. Between Kurilo and Lyutibrod (over a stretch of 63 km) the river cleaves through the Balkan Range, forming the picturesque Isker Gorge. The section between Kurilo and Tserovo stations forms a «villa reservation zone» of the capital. Several holiday

settlements are strung out along the Isker River defile: Vlado Trichkov, Loukovo, Thompson, Svoge, and others. There are many favourite tourist haunts, and the river draws many anglers on week-ends and holidays. Fishing is permitted all along the Isker River.

The vertical 300 m high Lakatnik Rocks, near the station by the same name, are great favourites with mountaineering fans. There is an Alpine Chalet on the summit, perched like a bird's nest, and over the «Kuklata» (Doll) rock a monument has been built in memory of the men who perished in the anti-fascist uprising in 1923. The famous Lakatnik cave is a vast maze with fascinating stalactites, subterranean lakes and waterfalls, with a rich fauna. The subterranean river has formed the turbulent Zhitolyub spring. There is a hunting lodge on the banks of the Isker, near Lakatnik Station.

From Lakatnik a mountain road opening broad view leads to the balneological centre Vurshets (30 km), with one stretch of the road passing through the village of Milanovo to Vratsa (38 km).

Near the Eliseina RR Station rises the impressive frame of the Georgi Dimitrov copper works, processing the ores brought from the Medna and Sedmochislenitsi mines in the Balkan Range near Vratsa.

Not far from Cherepish Station, on a terraced hill where the Isker River makes a sharp bend, is the Cherepish Monastery founded about the year 1600, with valuable old Bulgarian woodcarvings and murals.

Opposite the village of Lyutibrod, marking the end of the Isker Gorge, rise the «Ritli» vertical limestone cliffs — several hundred metres high and 4.6 metres thick, formed by changes in the earth's crust.

Mezdra (6,514 inhabitants). Important railway junction, with a line to Vidin and Lom. 101 km from Sofia and 16 km from Vratsa by road. A centre of the cotton, spirits and polished quarry stone industries.

Between the railway stations of Roman and Karlukovo, the Isker River has again cut deeply into the vertical limestone cliffs. Near Karlukovo there are several interesting caves with a rich fauna and relics of the early Stone Age.

Leaving the Karlukovo defile, the railway plunges into the broad and fertile Danubian plain. At Cherven Bryag Station

a narrow gauge leads to Byala Slatina and the Danubian port of Oryahovo.

Cherven Bryag (9,549 inhabitants). A lively railway station, transport and commercial centre for several prosperous counties in the Danubian plain. One of the major wheat growing and flour mill centres in the country. The town has a developed food, ceramic, woodprocessing and textile industry.

Beyond Cherven Bryag, before it reaches Pleven, the line passes by the villages of Dolni and Gorni Dubnik, growing fine melons and water melons.

Pleven (57,578 inhabitants). The biggest city, and main administrative, economic and cultural centre in the Danubian Plain. 205 km from Sofia, 151 from Roussé, and 124 km from Turnovo. The town has an old history (II c. BC). An old Thracian and later a Roman fortress, built somewhat to the south of the modern town in the gorge of the river Tuchenitsa.

Today Pleven is a grand monument, dedicated to Russian military glory. Scores of monuments on the heights around the town express the gratitude of the Bulgarian people to their liberators, following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.

A Mausoleum was opened in 1907 in the Red Square — southern part of the town, with a memorial chapel and ossuary, elaborately decorated in artistic relief and fine murals. Old Russian cannon pieces have been mounted on special columns in the park of the Mausoleum.

The Skobelev museum-park has been laid out in the southwest suburbs of the town, which witnessed heavy fighting during the third charge by the Russian forces against the Turkish garrison besieged in the fortress.

The Skobelev Park is also known for the Stoyan and Vladimir Zaimov Museum, in honour of the great patriot and his son, General Vladimir Zaimov, shot by the fascists in 1942.

The Pleven Museum has an interesting collection of relics dating from the early Stone Age, and from Thracian and Roman times; sculptural works found at the time of excavations of the ancient Ulpia Escus near the village of Gigen; exhibits showing the life of the old Slavs; and finds brought from the ancient acropolis near the town of Loukovit.

Facing the National Theatre, a monument has been built in memory of partisans of the district, fallen in the fight against

fascism. In the centre of the town there is an impressive monument dedicated to the men of the III-rd Ukrainian Front.

Pleven is an important industrial, commercial and viticultural centre.

The big Kailuka Park just outside the town in the valley of the Tuchenitsa River, is a popular place for rest and recreation. There is a great cave in the park, in which Balkantourist has built a restaurant, whose attractions are truly unique. A little further to the south in the gorge formed by the river, Balkantourist has built almost hewn in the rocks a modern hotel and restaurant, garages, etc.

Pleven is an important transport centre with good roads to all of the bigger towns in the Danubian Plain: Svishtov, Nikopol, Oryahovo, Knezha, Lovech, Sevlievo. It is also a railroad junction on the central RR line with a line passing through Yassen Station to the Danubian port of Somovit.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s : Balkan — 1, Buxton St., Tel. 967

Balkantourist — at the Kailuka Park, Tel. 28-31/33

R e s t a u r a n t s : Balkantourist — In the cave of the Kailuka Park, Tel. 972

Restaurant in the hotel, Tel. 28-31/33

Balkantourist — in Pleven, 30, Svoboda Square, Tel. 971

T r a n s p o r t : Motor cars and buses — 28, Grenaderska St. Tel. 15-52

Petrol Station — 2, G. Dimitrov St. Tel. 14-26

The village of G r i v i t s a, 8 km east of Pleven was the site of epic battles between the Rumanian forces and the Turks in the battle for the liberation of Bulgaria. The Rumanian people have commemorated the event by a fine Mausoleum, with a memorial chapel and ossuary. Fine murals and ornaments by eminent Rumanian artists. Outside the village, to the north-west of the Mausoleum, are the historical Gri-vitsa forts No 1 and 2, where many monuments now commemorate the exploits of the Russian and Rumanian warriors fallen in battle.

The village of P o r d i m, 20 km from Pleven, has two historical museums — «Headquarters of the Russian Army in 1877-1878», and «The Rumanian Soldier — 1877-1878».

Levski (8,013 inhabitants). 49 km from Pleven and 49 km from the big railway and road junction of Gorna Oryahovitsa.

The recently discovered Roman tomb in the vicinity of the town has become an object of increasing tourist interest.

The town is an important railway junction, with lines to Svishtov on the Danube, and to Lovech and Troyan in the Balkan Range.

Pavlikeni (9,265 inhabitants). A rapidly developing young town. An agricultural and industrial centre in rich farming country.

The town has a mechanical engineering works, several factories and wineries. The fertile land in the district is criss-crossed by canals of the Rossitsa irrigation system, drawing its waters from the Alexander Stamboliiski Dam.

Pavlikeni is an important junction, with roads leading to Svishtov (55 km), Pleven (70 km), Sevlievo (41 km), Turnovo (37 km), Gabrovo (69 km), Gorna Oryahovitsa (34 km).

Souhindol (4,128 inhabitants). An important viticultural centre 13 km from Pavlikeni, on the road to Sevlievo. Its wine cellars are among the very biggest in the country.

Byala Cherkva (3,735 inhabitants). A thriving village on the left bank of the Rossitsa River, near Pavlikeni. Home town of Bacho Kiro — eminent patriot of the National Revival epoch, and of our poet Tsanko Tserkovski.

Gorna Oryahovitsa Station. Junction with most intensive traffic on the main Sofia-Varna line. A modern station with underground passages for the travellers, leading to the different platforms.

Gorna Oryahovitsa Town (18,907 inhabitants). 3 km from the station. In 1443 Ladislaus Varnenczyk passed through the town on his campaign against the Turks, receiving help from the population. At the time of the April Uprising of 1876, Gorna Oryahovitsa was the seat of the District Revolutionary Committee. A monument has been dedicated to the revolutionary leader Georgi Izmirliiev, caught by the Turks and hanged in the main square.

There are big sugar refineries in the town, as well as mechanical engineering, ceramic, canning and other factories.

Gorna Oryahovitsa is an airport on the Sofia-Varna, and Roussé-Plovdiv lines.

Popovo (10,650 inhabitants). An agricultural centre. A lathe plant was built during the Second Five Year Plan.

Turgovishte (14,193 inhabitants). A district centre on the main road to Turnovo (103 km), Kolarovgrad (40 km) and Varna (134 km). Good roads to Popovo (37 km), Preslav (25 km) and Razgrad (36 km).

Razgrad (18,416 inhabitants). A district centre near the Beli Lom River. The town itself is some 5 km distant from its railway station on the Roussé-Varna line. Built on the site of an ancient Thracian settlement and later a Roman fortress, known in history as the Abritus.

The town takes pride in the modern penicillin plant, built in 1954, whose range of pharmaceutical products is finding a ready market abroad. Near the plant one can still see ruins of the Roman fortress Abritus.

Razgrad has a museum, a state symphony orchestra, a library and a sports stadium. One of the seven Turkish mosques in the town (built in 1614) is a tribute to the building art of the period.

In the forests near the village of Voden, the Razgrad tourists have built the attractive «Loudogorets» chalet, which forms a convenient base for outings to the surrounding district.

Razgrad is a junction, with roads leading to Roussé (66 km), Kolarovgrad (49 km), Popovo (35 km), Turgovishte (37 km), Isperih (35 km) and Kubrat (36 km).

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l — General Zaimov Square, Tel. 57

R e s t a u r a n t — Republika — Tel. 133

P e t r o l station — St. Karadja St., Tel. 177

Kolarovgrad. District centre and railway and road junction on the Sofia-Varna line. (See p. 69)

Kaspichan Station. Railway junction on the railway lines Sofia-Varna, Roussé-Varna and Kaspichan-Novı Pazar-Kaolinovo

village, with a local line to the village of Todor Ikonomovo.

Kaspichan Station is the forwarding point for the agricultural products and industrial goods of a rich county. Near the station there are several ceramic factories and flour mills.

After Kaspichan the railway line runs along the valley of the Provadiiska River, which as it approaches the town cuts deep into the plateau to form a true canyon.

Provadia (12,426 inhabitants). Stretching over the length of 3 km along the picturesque defile of the Provadiiska River. In medieval times it was the site of the Roman fortress Provaton, and parts of its ruins can still be seen on the sloping gorge.

From the train one can see the «Arkovna» tourist club, built on the heights bordering the defile.

By road Provadia is 82 km from Aitos, 56 km from Kolarovgrad and 40 km from Varna.

Sindel Junction on the railway lines Sofia-Varna, Varna-Karnobat and Sindel-Staro Oryahovo (branching off at Yunak Station, south of Sindel). This last local line serves the inhabited localities along the lower reaches of the Kamchia River in the Longosa forests.

Razdelna Station. Junction, where the Sofia-Varna line branches off towards Tolboukhin and General Toshevo, and then on to the Rumanian border.

Before reaching Varna on the Black Sea coast, the railway line runs along the south bank of the Gebedje Lake and the «Stoiko Peyev» glass and porcelain factory at Beloslav Station — the biggest enterprise of its kind in the country.

From Beloslav to the Port of Varna the line follows the northern bank of the Varna Lake.

Sofia—Botevgrad—Boaza—Lovech—Sevlievo—Turnovo—Omourtag—Turgovishte—Kolarovgrad—Maddara—Novi Pazar—Pobitite Kamuni—Varna

(by road)

This is the most direct route from Sofia to Varna (492 km). A considerable part of the road goes over several Balkan Range passes and attractive woodland, with special facilities and services provided for motorists.

From Sofia the road passes by the Vrazhdebna Airport, crosses the Sub-Balkan railway line and climbs up the slopes of the Balkan Range. Near the village of Potop there is a big monument dedicated to the men of the «Chavdar» partisan detachment. The road then dives into the colourful Chureshki Pass and circles peak Mourgash (1,687 m) to the east.

Motorists always find it pleasant to stop for a short rest on the «Vitinya» divide, with sunny mountain clearings among the pines. From the foresters' lodge on the summit there is a fine view of the mountainside. The Vitinya reservation has a deer farm.

Botevgrad (8,683 inhabitants). 63 km from Sofia, in a hollow surrounded on all sides by the rolling divides of the Balkan Range. It is a developing live stock breeding, fruit growing, viticultural and silkworm breeding centre.

In the main street of Botevgrad there is an old clock tower which is thought to be one of the most interesting of its kind in Bulgaria.

The town has a museum and an amateur orchestra. It has good road communications with the surrounding countryside. The nearest railway station (Mezdra) is 34 km away.

In the centre of the town there is a modern three-storied hotel with 24 rooms (accommodating about 60 visitors) and a good restaurant.

An interesting stone inscription from feudal times has been discovered in the Urvich forest near the village of Bozhenitsa. On it the local feudal lord (the bolyar Sevast Ognyan) gives an account of the hard life of the people during the reign of Ivan Shishman and the struggle against the Ottoman invaders. There are traces of an ancient fortress.

At the ninth kilometre on the highway east of Botevgrad, a country road leads to the town of Etropole.

Etropole (5,034 inhabitants). 27 km from Botevgrad. An old ore-mining centre and now a highland resort (545 m above sea level). Produces high quality Kashkaval-yellow cheese. A gold mine has been discovered in the vicinity of the town.

A clock tower was built in the centre of the town in 1710 for the Turkish garrison. Several interesting old houses, one of which now accommodates the local archaeological museum.

The nearest railway station Zlatitsa on the Sub-Balkan line is 29 km away. There is a good road to the Roman Station (52 km)

on the Sofia-Varna line, and also to the town of Teteven, Ribaritsa resort, and others.

The Sveta Troitsa (Holy Trinity) Monastery is 5 km from Etropole, known for its mineral water spring.

Yablanitsa. A modern little village, where the principle highway Sofia-Varna is intersected by the Vratsa-Teteven-Troyan road. Also roads leading to Loukovit and Pleven (via Dermantsi). Near the source of the Panega River.

Seven km north-east of the town lies one of the deepest known caves in the country (127 m). The mouth of the Besdunen Pchelina (Endless Beehive) is a sheer vertical drop, with a big subterranean chamber at the bottom.

Teteven (7,799 inhabitants). A mountain resort 415 m above sea level some 24 km from the village of Yablanitsa on the road Yablanitsa-Teteven-Troyan. The town is built on the banks of the Beli Vit River. The mountainside around boasts the best beech forests in the land, furnishing timber for our building industry. The town has the biggest plywood and boarding factory in the country for making prefabricated houses and cottages.

From Teteven the road goes on to Troyan (52 km). The nearest station, Cherven Bryag (on the Sofia-Varna main line) is 62 km away.

Ribaritsa. A pleasant climatic mountain resort 12 km south-east of Teteven, on the road to Troyan. Built on the Beli Vit River. Angling. Numerous villas offer cozy accommodation.

There is a monument eight kilometres from the town, on the banks of the Kostina River, where the leader of the April Uprising of 1876, Georgi Benkovski, met his death.

Glozhene Monastery. 12 km north of Teteven, in an inviting landscape. The monastery has a fine iconostasis of the 12th century.

2 km south-east of the Glozhene Monastery lies the Morovitsa Cave, an object of national tourist interest. Relics found in the cave date from human habitations during the early Stone Age. The skeletons of a cave bear and cave hiena are found in the Mitrovitsa Cave.

Between the villages of Yablanitsa and Malka Brestovitsa there is a good road to the town of Loukovit, running along the

banks of the Zlatna Panega River. The river takes its source from a big karst source forming an Upper and a Lower Lake, separated by a natural rocky weir.

Loukovit (8,812 inhabitants). 23 km from Yablanitsa and 12 km from Cherven Bryag Station by road. Built on the banks of the Panega River, whose waters irrigate its fine vegetable gardens. A farming centre. Pedigree cattle and livestock farms. Spring and autumn cattle fairs.

The village of Malka Brestnitsa is on the main road 10 km from Yablanitsa, and only 1 km from the source of the Panega River. The village is famous for the big Sueva Dupka cave, a national object of tourist interest. The cave has five big underground halls with connecting passages and fine stalactites and stalagmites. In the Koupena Hall these formations have taken the shape of a gracefully draped colonnade. Another hall has been given the name of the «Underground City».

Boaza. An attractive highland locality 115 km from Sofia, near the Vit River where the principal highway intersects the Pleven-Teteven road, Balkantourist has built a camping ground with every amenity that motorists could desire. Running water, a canteen, snack bar, grocery and food stall. There is a park with pleasant forest paths, with tents where motorists can stop for a rest or stay overnight. Parking room and several courts and playgrounds right by.

Near Boaza, south of the main highway, on the road leading towards the village of Gradeshnitsa, one comes to the remarkable gradeshnishka cave with underground chambers and passages, forming a labyrinth which is in places over 800 metres deep. The crystal-clear waters in the galleries mirror the snow-white stalactites, stalagmites and wondrous other formations above.

The road between the village of Yablanitsa and Lovech reveals fascinating mountain and forest landscapes.

Lovech (17,963 inhabitants). 167 km from Sofia and 52 km from Boaza by road. Picturesquely trailing over the banks of the Osum River which flows right through the city. Old Lovech descends amphitheatrically down to the river, near the ruins of an old Roman fortress Melta above. The new part of town has developed on the left bank. Copses of lilac trees on the surrounding heights.

In the past the Lovech craftsmen made fine leather goods. Now it has a big modern leather factory. Its mechanical engineering works makes the Bulgarian Balkan bicycles and motor cycles. There is also a factory for powdered milk.

Lovech is known for its original covered bridge on the Osum River — a bazaar with little shops, tea-rooms and artisan workshops lining its sides. It was built before our country's liberation from Ottoman rule by the famous Bulgarian self-taught architect and builder, Nikola Fichev.

The «Stratesha» elevation surrounding the old Melta fortress has now been turned into an attractive park, with a lodge. The White and Red monuments on the hill commemorate the Russian army men fallen in the Russo-Turkish war of liberation. From the park there is a fine view of the town and the countryside around. One can now go from the centre of the town to the Stratesh Park over a new suspension bridge spanning the Osum River.

Some 3 km south of the town in the valley of the Osum River there is a monument dedicated to the partisan poet Hristo Kurpachev.

Lovech has a National Museum with a valuable collection of old editions, old arms, etc., with a special section dedicated to the revolutionary movement in the district.

Lovech is a station on the railway line Levski-Troyan, and a road junction for Sofia-Varna and Svishtov-Karlovo.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Moskva — 62, Georgi Dimitrov St., Tel. 135;

Balkan — 3, Georgi Dimitrov St., Tel. 283.

R e s t a u r a n t s: Volga — 62, Georgi Dimitrov St., Tel. 38

Koubanski Kazak — 95, Georgi Dimitrov St., Tel. 232

M u s e u m: National Museum — the Library, Tel. 21⁰

Vassil Levski Museum — 151, Vassil Levski St.,
Tel. 294.

T r a n s p o r t: Taxis — 6, Prof. B. Tsonev St., Tel. 117
and 123

Bus station — G. Dimitrov St., Tel. 369

Petrol station — A. Kusov St., Tel. 105

Car repairs — 6, G. Genov St., Tel. 314

The monumental Devetashka Cave with three galleries and subterranean lakes is 21 km from the town.

To the south of the town, the Levski-Lovech-Troyan RR line runs along the banks of the Osum river, amid a colourful landscape.

Troyan (9,973 inhabitants). 35 km from Lovech, on the banks of the Beli Osum River. A typical highland town with broad-eaved houses. A popular climatic resort (420 m above sea level) with a State Sanatorium.

Troyan has long been known for its artisan crafts. Nowadays new industrial enterprises have sprung up carrying the traditions of the old master-craftsmen — making fine ceramic works, pottery, poker work and fur caps.

Home of the famous Slivova plum brandy and fine flat sausage (Loukanka).

In the spirit of its old traditions, Troyan has a ceramic technical college and a permanent ceramic exhibition hall. A dramatic theatre and an operetta company. Motorists will find pleasant accommodation and good service at the new modern hotel and rest home at «Kapincha» locality.

Troyan is a convenient starting point for the Balkan Range peaks of Rousalka (Maragidik 2150 m), Levski (Ambaritsa 2166 m), Botev (2376 m) and Kozyata Stena — on which the rare Edelweiss grows.

Troyan is the terminus of the Lovech-Troyan RR line. The road, running parallel to the line, continues southwards across the majestic Troyan Pass. Winding gracefully up the mountain, it crosses the Balkan Range and descends to the village of Kurnare, where it joins the Sub-Balkan highway Sofia-Karlovo-Bourgas-Troyan. Regular buses to Gabrovo, Pleven, Teteven, and others.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Town hotel — in the centre, Tel. 118

R e s t a u r a n t s: Bulgaria — right by the hotel, Tel. 45
Stara Planina — near Rakovski Square — Tel. 307

T h e a t r e s: The National Theatre — Tel. 67

T r a n s p o r t: Bus station — Rakovski Square, Tel. 24
Petrol station — Rakovski Square, Tel. 78

Troyan Monastery. 13 km east of the town, in beautiful country. Built in the 17th century, it is a tribute to the architectural talent of our self-taught old builders. Exquisite murals by Zahari Zograph — famous iconographer and artist of the Samokov School. The woodcarved iconostasis was made by Tryavna masters. Vassil Levski, Volov and other revolutionaries in the fight for freedom from Ottoman rule found shelter and worked in the monastery. Levski's room has been preserved as a small revolutionary museum. The monastery has a rich library. One part of the monastery is run as a hotel, accommodating about 200 travellers. There are three buses daily between the Troyan Monastery and the town.

The Shipkovo highland and mineral water resort is 17 km west of Troyan by road.

The Little Oreshak resort is only 2 km from the Troyan Monastery. The village is known for its fine poker-work in national style. There is trout in the Cherni Vit River and its tributaries, and a hunting and fishermen's lodge in the vicinity.

Sevlievo (14,420 inhabitants). 40 km from Lovech by road. A developing industry — factory for electric cables, the processing of non-ferrous metals, ceramics, cotton textiles. A State agricultural and live stock breeding farm. Sevlievo district grows the famous Gumza grapes which makes the well-known wine by the same name.

On the banks of the Rossitsa River, in the darkland, there is a monument dedicated to fighters for liberation.

The Church of the Prorok Iliya (Prophet Elijah) is known for the fine woodcarvings on its iconostasis — like delicate lacework. A clock tower built in 1777 during the days of Sultan Abdul Hamid I and a great old stone warehouse (Hadji-kolyova Maza), built by Nikola Fichev.

Sevlievo is an important road junction, communicating with all inhabited localities in the district. A big motor transport base. The nearest railway station is Pavlikeni (41 km) on the Sofia-Varna line.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: the Town hotel — 19, Stefan Peshev St., Tel. 41

R e s t a u r a n t s: Moskva — 8, Stefan Peshev St., Tel. 106
Odessa — Tel. 19;

Loven Dom (Hunting Lodge) — Tel. 185

M u s e u m : National Museum — 6, Skobelev St., Tel. 260

T r a n s p o r t: Taxis — Tel. 162;

Bus station — A. Stamboliski Square, Tel. 103

Petrol station — on the road to Gabrovo, Tel. 130

Car repairs — 10, G. Genov St., Tel. 120.

From Sevlievo there is also a very good road to Gabrovo (see p. 73).

Turnovo (24,648 inhabitants). 49 km from Sevlievo, 256 km from Sofia and 236 km from Varna by road. A station on the trans-Balkan railway line Roussé-Stara Zagora.

A beautiful old town, amphitheatrically located over the steep banks of the Yantra River. A favourite with foreign tourists and motorists because of its romantic landscape, monuments, old ruins, and historical background.

«The city of artists and poets» — as it has been inspiringly called by the Czech sculptor, Prof. Antoni Novak.

In medieval times Turnovo was the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom (1185-1396) until the fortress was besieged and destroyed in the days of the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans. The new town has grown on the rocky Orlovets Hill.

Turnovo has developed into an important cultural and administrative centre. The new public and other buildings are all in a style harmonising with the landscape around. A new industrial quarter has sprung up in the town. The old part of Turnovo has been preserved as an object of historical interest, particularly on the Tsarevets and Trapezitsa hills and the interlying Assenova Mahala quarter.

T s a r e v e t s. Ruins of the old palaces, throne room, royal family chapel, store-houses, etc. On the summit at Kamban Vruh (Belfry Peak) one can see the ruins of the Patriarch-

al Church. One of the fortress towers over the Yantra has been fully restored. Legend has it that the emperor Baldwin of Flanders, made captive by the Bulgarian King Kaloyan, was imprisoned in the tower dungeon.

T r a p e z i t s a. The second acropolis of the old Bulgarian capital protected the habitations of the bolyar nobility and high clergy. The ruins of 17 churches have so far been discovered on the hill, around which the winding waters of the Yantra River form a natural moat on three sides.

It was in the Church of St. Dimiter at Assenova Mahala that the two brothers Assen and Peter proclaimed the rebellion that overthrew Byzantine rule and laid the foundations of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom.

The Church of the Forty Martyrs is also in a good state of preservation. It was built in 1230 by order of King Ivan Assen II to commemorate his victory over the Byzantine Emperor Theodore Comnenes at Klokotnitsa. In the church there are two valuable monuments of Bulgarian history, the Khan Omourtag and Assen stone pillars, with inscriptions.

In the town there are many other architectural monuments from the Bulgarian National Revival epoch, most of them built by the famous self-taught architect and builder of his day, Nikola Fichev, such as Hadji Nikola's caravan serail, the old Turkish Governor Konak, the churches of Sts. Constantine and Helena, Sts. Kiril and Metodi, and others.

Balkantourist has built a big modern hotel on the heights overlooking the Yantra River, with a splendid view of the historical hills of Tsarevets and Trapesitsa, the bolyar village of Arbanassi and the river valley. The hotel has 70 rooms with every modern comfort and three suites with terraces, climatic installations, central heating and luminescent lighting. There is a big restaurant and a banqueting hall for 200, tea-rooms, and a select cuisine and wine-cellar.

Turnovo is accessible by air both from Sofia and Varna. The TABSO planes land at the near-by airport of Gorna Oryahovitsa, and their coach takes the passengers to Turnovo, for which no extra charge is made.

The town is on the Sofia-Varna main highway, with another branch leading to Roussé and the Rumanian Frontier. Motorists coming from the north can visit Turnovo by way of Roussé-Byala-Turnovo, and those coming from the south — over plovdiv-Karlovo-Kazanluk-Gabrovo-Turnovo. There is a bus

service in the town.

The near-by village of Arbanassi and the interesting monasteries near the town are all linked by first class roads and coach services.

The picturesque Preobrazhenski and Sveta Troitsa (Holy Trinity) monasteries are in closest proximity, and are linked with the revolutionary and cultural past of the town.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Veliko Turnovo (a Balkantourist Hotel) — Velchova Zavera Square, Tel. 23-92

Balkantourist — 26, Opulchenska St., Tel. 23-77

Balkan — Hristo Botev Boulevard, Tel. 32-82

Shipka — 4, Ivailo St., Tel. 30-17

Bulgaria — 8, Vassil Levski St., Tel. 23-32

R e s t a u r a n t s: Veliko Turnovo (Balkantourist) — Velchova Zavera Square, Tel. 23-91

Balkantourist — 26, Opulchenska St., Tel. 22-90

Balkan — D. Blagoev St., Tel. 21-28

Moskva — 19, G. Dimitrov St., Tel. 23-68

Mlada Gvardia — Deveti Septemvri Square, Tel. 32-43

T h e a t r e s: National Theatre — Chitalishtna St., Tel. 20-24

Concert Bureau — 21, Chitalishtna St., Tel. 33-89

M u s e u m s: National Museum — 2, Ivanka Boteva St. Tel. 22-56

The P. R. Slaveikov Museum — 15, Dragoman St.
The Rabotnik (Worker) printing shop — 10, Chitalishtna St.

T r a n s p o r t: Taxis — 1, Dondoukov Boulevard, Tel. 33-10

TABSO Airways — 1, Dondoukov Boulevard, Tel. 34-45

Petrol station — 98, Hristo Botev Boulevard, Tel. 20-52

Car repairs — near Trapezitsa RR Station, Tel. 30-45

Arbanassi. A village 3 km from Turnovo, on the road to Gorna Oryahovitsa. Summer residence of the Greek bishops in the days when Bulgaria was under Ottoman rule. There are interesting old houses built like veritable little strongholds, five

churches and two monasteries. From Arbanassi there is a fine panorama of Turnovo.

Nicopolis ad Istrum. 18 km north of Turnovo, near the village of Nikyup are the ruins of the most famous Roman town and fort Nicopolis ad Istrum beyond the Balkan Mountains. The city was founded by the Roman Emperor Trajan in 106 to commemorate his victory over the Dacian tribes. The lay out of the settlement has been fully preserved with fragments of its architecture (theatre, aqueduct, etc.), and a wall that was three metres thick.

The highway to Varna leading out of Turnovo passes by the historical hill of Sveta Gora, past several prosperous villages and on to the town of Omourtag. At 9th km from Turnovo the highway intersects the road Gorna Oryahovitsa-Liaskovets-Elena-Nova Zagora.

Liaskovets (6,481 inhabitants). 3 km north of the main highway and 12 km from Turnovo. A viticultural, market gardening and fruit growing centre. Modern wineries and wine-cellars producing different select sorts of wine, including champagne.

Lyaskovets is a RR station on the Gorna Oryahovitsa-Zlata-ritsa line.

Elena (4,092 inhabitants). 36 km from Gorna Oryahovitsa and 31 km south of the principal highway. An old mountain town nestling in a fold of the Balkan Range near peak Chumerna (1,536 m).

Carpet weaving artisan crafts and workshops for laces.

An interesting clock tower.

Houses built in the National Revival style with overlapping bay windows, broad eaves, latticed windows and woodcarved interior decorations.

The house of Ilarion Makariopolski (prominent figure of the National Revival era), in local style, has been preserved as a museum.

The nearest RR station is Zlata-ritsa (17 km) on the branch line Gorna Oryahovitsa-Zlata-ritsa. Elena is on the road Turnovo-Elena-Tvurditsa Pass, leading into Southern Bulgaria.

Omourtag (6,145 inhabitants). 79 km from Turnovo. A farming centre. Factory for parquetry. Junction for the highway to Varna, and roads from Turgovishte and Popovo to Kotel and Sliven, with regular coach services. Nearest RR station — Turgo-

vshte (24 km). The interesting Marina Douпка cave is some 12 km from the town.

Turgovishte (14,241 inhabitants). 24 km from Omourtag, on the Sofia-Gorna Oryahovitsa-Varna line.

In the town itself there are interesting old houses with stylish eaves and woodcarved decorations. One of them now accommodates the local archaeological collection and materials of the resistance movement. There is a new hotel of Balkan-tourist.

In the Hunting Park there are several rest homes and a Pioneer summer camp. The near-by mineral water source is used for drinking because of its curative properties. On the road to Popovo there is a lake with possibilities for fishing.

Turgovishte is a road junction for Kolarovgrad, Preslav, Omourtag, Elhovo and Razgrad.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l : Moskva — Gladstone St., Tel. 123

Sofia — 1, Hristo Botev St., Tel. 181

R e s t a u r a n t s : Moskva — Gladstone St., Tel. 123

Sevastopol — 9, Vassil Levski St., Tel. 202

M u s e u m : The Hadjiangel house-museum — 10, Rakovski St.

T r a n s p o r t : Taxis — Nezavisimost Square, Tel. 181;

Petrol station — Deveti Septemvri Boulevard, Tel. 269;

Car repairs — Hadji Dimiter St., Tel. 210.

Kolarovgrad (41,670 inhabitants). Station on the Sofia-Varna line, 40 km from Turgovishte, 143 km from Turnovo and 399 km from Sofia.

In the Ottoman days, it was an important centre of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement.

Today Kolarovgrad is a thriving industrial centre of the beer, tobacco, flour-mill, canning, chemical, leather and other industries. There is a mechanical engineering works and an automobile and tractor spare parts factory. Viticulture. A traditional autumn agricultural fair.

Its broad avenues and gardens are graced by the statues or busts of eminent Bulgarians, like P. Volov, Stefan Karadja, Dimiter Blagoev, General Vladimir Zaimov, Vela Piskova and Vassil Kolarov. Also a monument dedicated to the Hungarian patriot and revolutionary Lajos Kossuth who lived here in emigration, and a monument to the Soviet Army.

The first Bulgarian Marxists — Dimiter Blagoev and Vassil Kolarov once worked in Kolarovgrad (former Shoumen).

Among the sights of Kolarovgrad, one counts:

The Tomboul Djami mosk built in 1745 by Sherif Pasha and decorated with inscriptions and arabesques; the clock tower built in 1740 (the clock itself still working with the greatest precision) and the Bazaar built in Ottoman days — a solid stone structure; and many houses in Bulgarian style.

The Kolarovgrad National Museum has a rich collection, in which there is a model of the first Bulgarian capital — Pliska, relics found at Preslav, and materials of the workers' revolutionary movement.

The house where Vassil Kolarov was born is now a museum, reflecting the environment in which he lived and worked, and containing many documents relating to his social and political activities.

The Lajos Kossuth Museum has in its collection materials of the national liberation struggle of the Hungarian people against feudal exploitation. There is also a special section for Hungarian national costumes, etc.

Kolarovgrad has a dramatic theatre (now in a new building), a state symphony orchestra, and a state library.

The «Kioshkovete» park is a favourite place of recreation, with a good restaurant. From the park there is a fine view of the town and the surrounding district.

Near the town is the Vassil Kolarov state farm for pedigree horses.

From Kolarovgrad there is a branch line to Karnobat. Modern highways to Roussé (116 km), Silistra (112 km), Karnobat (103 km), Preslav (23 km) and to the attractive banks of the Kamchia River.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Deveti Septemvri — 20, Deveti Septemvri Square
Tel. 30-62

Leningrad — 8, Deveti Septemvri Square, Tel. 32-90
Sofia — 37, Tsar Osvoboditel St., Tel. 33-41

R e s t a u r a n t s: Deveti Septemvri — 20, Deveti Septemvri Sq. Tel. 24-35

Bulgaria — 78, Slavianski Boulevard, Tel. 35-57

Sofia — 40, Slavianski Boulevard, Tel. 31-29

Borovets — at the «Kioshkovete» Park, Tel. 20-82

Casino — in the town garden — Tel. 35-60

T h e a t r e s: National Theatre — 74, Slavianska St., Tel. 24-53

Concert Bureau — Tel. 11-26.

M u s e u m s: National Museum — 15, D. Blagoev St., Tel. 30-40

The Vassil Kolarov Museum — 11, Todor Ikonomov St., Tel. 10-60

The Lajos Kossuth Museum — 27, Tsar Osvoboditel St., Tel. 23-99;

The Tomboul Djamiya mosk — 23, Rakovski St.

T r a n s p o r t: Bus station — 29, G. Dimitrov St., Tel. 10-57

Petrol station — Enyu Markovski St., Tel. 32-47

Car repairs — 3, Kaliakra St., Tel. 32-77.

Old Preslav. Ruins of the second capital of the First Bulgarian Kingdom: 23 km south-west from Kolarovgrad and 3 km from modern Preslav by road. There is also a railway line to Old Preslav, branching off the Tsar Kroum Station.

In the 10th century Old Preslav was a flourishing centre of Slav-Bulgarian culture, up to 1185.

At present one can see the ruins of the royal palace, the famous Round Church (also known as the Golden Simeon Church), the old workshop for ornamental ceramics, part of the fortress wall, and other relics.

A good road to the south-west of the town leads through a copse of locust trees to near-by «Patleina» locality (2 km) on the banks of the Tundja River. Here one can see the ruins of the old Patleina Monastery, and the workshop famous for

its artistic ceramics. There are several old tombs and a fortress watch tower.

Madara. 14 km east of Kolarovgrad by road. For the Madara Park, Madara Cliffs and Madara Fortress one should get off the train at the second station after Kolarovgrad, which is one kilometre and a half away from these objects of tourist and historical interest. On the majestic vertical cliffs the old Bulgarians carved the Madara Horseman out of the solid rock—a unique cultural monument of that distant epoch. It is the image of a Bulgarian Khan, and the inscriptions mention important state treaties in the relations between Bulgaria, Byzantium and other states.

On the terraced ground to the left of the horseman there are traces of an old Christian basilica and higher up one can see from afar the entrance holes to what used to be a big monastery of the 13th and 14th centuries, tunnelling into the cliffs.

Steps hewn out of the stone lead up to the Madara Plateau and the ruins of the old Madara fortress, with a magnificent view of the surrounding country. One can see the remains of an old Roman villa near the village of Madara, the Pliska fortifications, and the Simeon fortress in the direction of Kolarovgrad.

At the foot of the cliff of the Madara Horseman, there is a new hotel with a good restaurant.

Right under the cliffs there is a small museum with interesting relics found during excavations, models of the old settlement, photos, drawings, etc.

Pliska. 25 km from Kolarovgrad and 9 km north of Kaspichan RR Station. One can see the ruins of the first Bulgarian capital, about 3 km from the modern village of Pliskov. One can also reach Pliska by train over the Roussé-Kaspichan line, getting off at Pliska Station, and continuing hence 6 km by road.

Pliska was the capital of Bulgaria between the 7th and 9th centuries. Considerable parts of the fortifications and royal palaces have been preserved — remarkable for their monumental proportions. The capital was protected by a deep moat, and had a citadel with strong stone walls and turrets. The «outer town» was crowded between the citadel and the outer walls. The citadel sheltered the royal palaces and public buildings.

The royal palace faced the eastern gate of the citadel, and was the most monumental edifice in the capital. Here is the royal basilica and further inside — the group of buildings forming what was known as the «smaller palace» surrounded by a massive brick wall.

A small museum on the site of the old Bulgarian capital has in its collection valuable relics of the epoch. There are furnished rooms for those who want to stay overnight.

Novi Pazar (9,149 inhabitants). 25 km from Kolarovgrad. A farming centre. Factory for porcelain-ware for our export trade. The town is on the narrow gauge line from Kaspichan to Todor Ikonomovo Station.

On the way to Varna, when crossing the Devnya lowland, the traveller will notice the tall stacks of a glass and porcelain factory, a soda plant, a cement plant and a sugar refinery.

Pobitite Kamuni (Dikili Tash). 13 km east of the village of Devnya and 18 km from Varna, on each side of the line there are big 6 m high stone pillars scattered among the sandy terrain. They were wrought by erosion in the course of centuries, or by cumulus — now forming a veritable forest of petrified tree trunks of unusual beauty. This forest has «grown» over an area of some 40 square kilometres, in numerous clusters. Some of the most interesting ones run right along the highway Varna-Sofia.

The Pobotite Kamuni are a rare freak of nature, now a reservation that will be developed into a National Park.

Five kilometres before reaching Varna, the road goes past the monuments erected in honour of the Polish King Ladislaus Varnenczik III (campaign against the Turks).

Varna (see p. 101)

Turnovo—Gabrovo—Mount Stoletov—Shipka— Kazanluk

(by road)

A route offering the greatest attractions to every motorist. It crosses the Balkan range by way of Gabrovo and Mount Stoletov. So it is Gabrovo by rail or road, and then southwards only by road over the historical Shipka Pass.

Gabrovo (38,032 inhabitants). 24 km from Turnovo by road, in the foothills of the Balkan Range, 392 m above sea level. Terminus of the Vurbanovo-Gabrovo branch of the RR line.

An industrial centre strung along the banks of the Yantra River. Big textile mills (wool), tanneries and leather factories, a mechanical engineering works (machine tools and instruments).

Gabrovo has a National Museum with a collection reviving memories of the old artisan crafts for which the town had long been famous even in Ottoman times. A National Theatre; stadium seating 15,000, sport grounds with open-air swimming pool and sand brought from Nessebur on the Black Sea coast.

9 km south of Gabrovo, perched on a high cliff is the old Sokolski Monastery.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Balkantourist — Purvi Mai Square, Tel. 25-32
Bulgaria — 40, Radetski St., Tel. 25-81

R e s t a u r a n t s: Septemvri — 40, Radetski St., Tel. 23-22
Purvi Mai — 6, Purvi Mai Square, Tel. 23-85
Moskva — Skobelevska St., Tel. 26-59
Malkoto Casino — Brianska St., Tel. 29-58

T h e a t r e: National Theatre — G. Dimitrov Sq., Tel. 24-90

M u s e u m: National Museum — 3, Genev St., Tel. 24-85

S t a d i u m: — Baba Zara St., Tel. 21-21

T r a n s p o r t: Bus station — 25, S. Karadja St., Tel. 26-47
Taxis — G. Dimitrov Square, Tel. 25-77
Petrol Station — 1, S. Karadja St., Tel. 21-40
Car repairs — 50, Skobelevska St., Tel. 21-97

From Gabrovo the road turns southwards and crosses the Balkan Range through the Shipka Pass at the foot of Mount Stoletov.

Mount Stoletov. The peak itself and the near-by elevations of Shipka and Orlovo Gnezdo (Eagle's Nest) are sacred soil for the Bulgarian people. During the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the Russian soldiers and Bulgarian volunteers fought bravely in defence of the Shipka Pass against superior enemy forces. The whole summit in this part of the mountain is

dotted with monuments commemorating these epic days, and is being preserved as a museum-park. On Mount Stoletov itself there is a 34 m high granite Monument of Freedom. A winding inside staircase leads up to the terrace on top, revealing fascinating landscapes in every direction — reaching the Thracian Plain, the Rhodope Mountains, the silver streak that is the Maritsa River, the lake behind the great wall of the Georgi Dimitrov Dam, the town of Kazanluk, and the Valley of Roses. Inside the monument there is an ossuary in the form of a huge marble sarcophagus. In the chamber on the ground floor there is a collection of old muskets, trophies, photos and paintings of that epoch.

Right below Mount Stoletov, only a few hundred metres away, there is a fine modern Balkantourist restaurant and hotel accommodating 100 travellers, lounge rooms, a terrace and dining room in old Bulgarian style, and a modern camping.

There are also Balkantourist stalls for the sale of fruits, vegetables and drinks; one for souvenirs, and a refreshments room.

Shipka. A village on the main road across the mountain, 35 km from Gabrovo, at the southern foothills of Mount Stoletov. A factory for bagpipes and blow-whistles. Just outside the village there is a splendid memorial church with five gilded cupolas and ossuary in memory of the Russian and Bulgarian warriors fallen in the War of Liberation (1877-1878).

The town of Kazanluk in the Valley of Roses is 12 km further south.

Sofia—Mezdra—Vratsa—Vidin

Branching off to Mihailovgrad-Berkovitsa and Lom

Direct communication between the capital and our north-western Danubian ports of Vidin and Lom.

By road: a road following the Isker Gorge, and another through the Petrohan Pass. Four kilometres before Mihailovgrad the road forks off towards Belogradchik and Vidin (the other continuing to Lom).

By rail: from Mezdra Junction the railway line turns to the north-west (the Balkan Range near Vratsa). From the train one can notice the impressive monument built on Mt. Okolchitsa, Pavolche village, in memory of our national poet and revolutionary, Hristo Botev, killed in battle against the Turks.

Vratsa (26,502 inhabitants). 117 km from Sofia by road. District centre in the northern foothills of the Balkan Range, near the picturesque gateway «Vratsata», carved out of the rock by the waters of the Leva River.

In early medieval days the town was further inside the gorge, and was fortified to guard the pass. Near the «Vratsata» there are traces of an old Bulgarian fortress and other fortifications near the one-time settlement of Vratitsa. Recently discovered stone slabs and inscriptions throw light on the early history of the town. In Ottoman days Vratsa was an important administrative and artisan centre. One can still see the old fortress tower, a big clock tower and houses of ancient architecture dating from that period. The town has been rapidly developing industrially.

Vratsa has a National Theatre, an amateur opera and a modern library and reading rooms.

The new Balkantourist Hotel and restaurant are in the centre of the town. There is another interesting new restaurant in the gorge near the «Vratsata» with four dining halls, each decorated in different style and its terrace bordering on an artificial lake. On the mountain slope right above there are attractive little two-bedded bungalows where visitors or motorists can rest.

The mountain near Vratsa is famous for its numerous caves, the best known of which are the Ledenika and Zmeyeva Douпка. Near the Ledenika Cave there is a chalet and three rest homes, linked with the city by a good road. Near the village of Chiren (16 km from Vratsa) is the longest cave in Bulgaria — Ponora, which is being preserved as an object of national tourist interest. The monumental rocky mountainside in the vicinity of Vratsa has turned it into a favourite haunt for lovers of the mountaineering sport.

From Vratsa there is a fine road to Byala Slatina (50 km) and the port of Oryahovo (82 km) on the Danube. The so-called Panorama Road through the village of Milanovo links Vratsa with the highway passing through the Isker Gorge at Lakatnik RR Station (40 km).

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l a n d r e s t a u r a n t: Balkan (Balkantourist) — Hristo Botev Sq., Tel. 23-61 and 14-78.

T r a n s p o r t: Bus station — in the square facing the RR station.

Petrol station — D. Blagoev Square, Tel. 10-67.

Vurshets (3,450 inhabitants). A first rate climatic and balneological centre, in a depression at the northern approaches of the Balkan Mountains.

A colder mineral water spring (32.2°C) and a warmer source (36°C), each with pools, private baths, and medical consultation rooms. Pleasant parkland around.

There are numerous villas, hotels, restaurants and tea-rooms. Several new rest homes and balneosanatoriums are under construction.

Vurshets was a prominent centre of revolutionary activity during the September anti-fascist uprising of 1923.

Among the points of tourist interest in its environs: the dented crown of the Todorini Koukli rocks near the summit of Koznitsa; the Stara Reka waterfall and the old Klisoura Monastery (9 km).

After Vratsa the railway line passes through the Beli Izvor station (14 km from Vurshets) and the impressive copper smelter «Wilhelm Piek», built during the years of the Second Five Year Plan. The RR junction of Boichinovtsi is near the River Ogosta, where the Mezdra-Vidin line branches off to the towns of Mihailovgrad and Berkovitsa.

Boichinovtsi (1,976 inhabitants). A village that made a name for itself in the resolute fighting during the days of the September Uprising in 1923.

The «Gavril Genov» state cannery is to the north of the station, with vacuum cannery, a macaroni factory, modern flour mill, sunflower oil refinery, fruit and vegetable driers, and others.

Mihailovgrad (13,434 inhabitants). On the RR line Boichinovtsi-Berkovitsa. By road — 107 km from Sofia, 44 km from Vratsa, 51 km from Lom and 67 km from Belogradchik. A district centre, with a revolutionary history, forming the centre

of the September Uprising of 1923. Almost the whole population in Mihailovgrad District took part in the great battle. All over the valley of the River Ogosta one can see the graves, monuments and memorial slabs of the brave insurgents who lost their lives in the Uprising. A monumental obelisk rises over the spot on the elevation outside the town, where the uprising was proclaimed.

There is a park in the centre of the town, and another with a lake near the Ogosta River; a sports stadium and open air swimming pool.

Berkovitsa (9,059 inhabitants). An attractive highland climatic resort in the western part of the Balkan Range, near the Kom peak. 84 km from Sofia and 74 km from the Danubian port of Lom.

Historical monuments: the clock tower built in 1762 and the two 18th century churches; ruins of an old Bulgarian settlement; a museum of the Bulgarian national poet Ivan Vazov. There is a new hotel of Balkantourist.

Known for the extensive cultivation of raspberries, strawberries, grapes and chestnuts. There are several rest homes and youth camps in its vicinity.

Among its main objects of tourist interest: Sinyat Vir (Blue Pool), the Haidoushki Vodopadi (Waterfalls,) the Konyarski Kladenets (Well) and the chalets of Zdravchenitsa and Kom.

Berkovitsa is on the highway linking the capital with North-West Bulgaria over the Petrohan Pass (highest point 1414 metres). Descending to the north, the road runs parallel to the three sections of the Petrohan hydro-electric power system — the Petrohan, Klisoura and Burzia power station.

The Vurshets Spa lies 18 km east of Berkovitsa. (see p. 77).

Near Mihailovgrad the Sofia-Lom highway forks off and an asphalt road leads to the town of Belogradchik (67 km from the junction).

At the 20th kilometer of this road another road turns towards the village of Chiprovtsi, situated in a colourful fold of the mountain (36 km from Mihailovgrad).

Chiprovtsi (3,456 inhabitants). An old village in the Balkan Mountain with relics of distant days. Ruins of a Roman fortress and settlement of the 6th century. In 1688 during the Chiprovtsi rebellion against Ottoman rule, the village was razed to the ground.

The mineral deposits discovered in the vicinity of the village (the Chiprovtsi mine) have transformed Chiprovtsi into a modern little ore mining centre. There are also carpet-weaving artisan cooperatives making the famous Chiprovtsi rugs.

Belogradchik (3,452 inhabitants). An inviting little mountain town, known in old Bulgarian history as Zelenigrad.

Belogradchik has a shady park, a good hotel and restaurant, a sports club, open-air swimming pool and sand strips. Construction work has been started on a new Balkantourist hotel with 150 beds and modern restaurant on the sloping terrain in the Hunting Park, amid a forest of pines.

In the vicinity of the town rise the famous Belogradchik rocks — a freak of nature wrought by erosion in wondrous forms. Like a fairy tale city of quaint figures, towers, castles, birds and animals in the fascinating gallery of nature.

Among the stone figures one can clearly distinguish various compositions — «Adam and Eve», the Sphynx, Lion, Bear and others.

Some 16 km to the north-west of Belogradchik, under the shapely dome of the Rabishka Mogila hill, lies the Magoura Cave — an intricate maze of subterranean halls and passages, which is being preserved as an object of national tourist interest. It has rich stalactite ornamentations, but is best known for its paintings made in the days of the cave-man — deer, birds and human figures.

There is a regular bus service from Belogradchik to Vidin (52 km) and the nearest RR station of Oreshets on the Mezdra-Vidin line. A good road to Lom (63 km) and Mihailovgrad (71 km).

Beyond the RR station of Boichinovtsi the Mezdra-Vidin line cuts across the fertile rolling hills in the Danube plain until the RR junction of Brussartsi, where a line branches off towards the thriving Danubian port of Lom.

After Brussartsi (on the RR line to Vidin) comes the Oreshets station — serving the town of Belogradchik, and the station of Stratsimir — for the border town of Kula, 27 km from the station by road. Near the town there are ruins of an old Roman-Byzantine fortress.

Vidin, a busy port on the Danube, is the terminus of the Mezdra-Vidin RR line (see p. 80).

Vidin—Archar—Lom—Kozlodouï—Oryahovo—Bai- kal—Somovit—Nikopol—Svishtov—Roussé—Tout- rakan—Sreburna—Silistra

(by boat, on the Danube)

Travelling by boat from Vidin on the River Danube is always a most enjoyable experience. The comfortable Bulgarian river boats sail down the river, to the ports of Roussé and Silistra.

Vidin (23,984 inhabitants). 209 km north-west of Sofia by road, over the Petrohan Pass. Terminus of the railway line Sofia-Mezdra-Vidin.

The town is on a big bend of the River Danube, near the old «Kale» fortifications. It is on the site of the ancient Bononia, a fortified city which flourished in the 3rd century B.C. In medieval times the Slavs called their fortified town by the name of Bdin, while during the 13th century Vidin became Bulgaria's main fortress on the border line and capital of the Western Bulgarian Kingdom.

A fishing and industrial centre; G. Dimitrov plant for electric pumps and a vacuum vegetable and fruit cannery.

In recent years the town has been modernised, with broad straight streets and a park on the banks of the Danube, with a hotel-restaurant of Balkantourist and an open-air cinema.

Perhaps the chief attraction of the town is the ancient Baba Vida fortress, the best preserved medieval fortress in Bulgaria, with massive towers and walls overlooking the river.

Other old monuments: the Turkish tower, the mosk and library of Osman Pazvantoglu (feudal lord who rebelled against the Ottoman Empire), the cruciform military barracks of his days, the Church of St. Panteleimon with murals of the 17th century, the Church of St. Petka, built in the 17th century by the Wallachian leader Matei Bessarab, many old houses, and the «Umbata» secret underground store-rooms of the wealthy traders coming to Vidin from Doubrovnik.

The town has a national museum with a valuable collection, and a museum of the youth revolutionary movement; a national Theatre, a State Symphony Orchestra and a big sports stadium.

The irrigation canals in the district cover 25 villages with several big pumping stations.

There are good roads to Lom, Belogradchik and Kula, and a ferryboat to the railway line on the Rumanian bank of the Danube at Kalafat.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Dounav — 12, Dunavska St., Tel. 13

R e s t a u r a n t s: Republika — 24, Todor Petrov St.,
Tel. 70

Volga — in the park.

T h e a t r e s: National Theatre — Gradinska St., Tel. 169
Concert Bureau — Tel. 131.

M u s e u m s: National Museum — Nora Pizanti St., Tel. 247
Boyan Chonos Museum — 1, Gladston St., Tel. 247

T r a n s p o r t: The Shipping Agency — Tel. 150

Bus station — 45, Todor Petrov St., Tel. 221

Petrol station — corner Dondoukov and Zlatarska
Streets, Tel. 67

Car repairs — 88, Todor Petrov Street.

Archar. A small port on the Danube 27 km from Vidin on the road to Lom. The ruins of Raziaria — one of the main fortresses in Roman times and base of the Roman Danubian fleet.

Lom (23,015 inhabitants). 57 km east of Vidin by road, 50 m above sea level. Situated on the left bank of the Lom River. Built on the site where the old Roman fortress of Almus once stood.

Lom is a modern Danubian port, closest to Sofia (158 km) and second in importance, next to Roussé. It is a viticultural and market-gardening centre, particularly famous for its select melons and water-melons. A big sugar refinery; factories for textiles, leather, tobacco and furniture.

There is a new hotel of Balkantourist.

Near the estuary of the Lom River there is a special harbour sheltering river crafts during the winter season.

Lom is a railway terminus for the Mezdra-Vidin line (branching off at Broussartsi for Lom). Good roads to Belogradchik (63 km), Vratsa and Oryahovo.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Moskva — 3, P. Volov St., Tel. 25-99

Slavianka — 10, Bozveli St., Tel. 20-04

R e s t a u r a n t s: Moskva — 37, Deveti Septemvri St.,
Tel. 25-09

M u s e u m: National Museum — 6, Tsar Kroum St., Tel. 14-10

T r a n s p o r t: Bus station — facing the Railway Station
Tel. 20-53

Petrol station — 2, Thrakia St., Tel. 23-36.

Kozlodoui. 39 km from Lom by road. It was here that the revolutionary detachment led by the great Bulgarian poet and patriot Hristo Botev landed on May 17, 1876, in its attempt to start a rebellion against Ottoman rule. There is an impressive monument on the banks of the Danube, commemorating the event.

Oryahovo (8,136 inhabitants). A port on the Danube, 19 km east of Kozlodoui. Terminus of the Cherven-Bryag-Oryahovo narrow gauge line. 198 km north from Sofia and 97 km from Mezdra. An old town situated on the sloping terraced bank of the Danube (226 m above sea level). A viticultural centre, exporting dessert grapes. A National Museum. Only one kilometre to the west of the town one can see the ruins of an old Bulgarian fortress tower.

There is a regular bus line between Oryahovo and Vratsa.

Baikal. A little port near the mouth of the Isker River, where it flows into the Danube. A good road to the town of Knezha (42 km), Pleven (52 km), and Nikopol (48 km).

The village of Gigen is 4 km east of the port by road, where recently the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences has discovered the foundations of the old Roman town Ulpia Oescus, with big public buildings, temples, baths, broad straight streets, marble columns and coloured mosaics.

Somovot (1,700 inhabitants). 39 km from the village of Baikál by road. A small harbour on the Danube, near the mouth of the Vit River. Terminus of the Yassen-Somovit RR line.

Nikopol (5,788 inhabitants). 54 km north of Pleven and 49 km from Svishtov by road. A Danubian port near the mouth of the Osum River.

Ancient Nicopolis was founded by the Roman Emperor Heraclius in 629 to commemorate his victories.

Modern Nikopol spreads over two hills with a fine view of the surrounding district. On an elevation there are ruins of old fortress walls. Over a fountain there is an inbuilt Roman tomb-stone with an inscription and verse. The town church is an interesting architectural monument.

Cherkovitsa is the nearest railway station, on the Yassen-Somovit line. There is a regular bus service over this stretch of 6 kilometres, and also regular communications by coach to Pleven and Svishtov.

Svishtov (18,537 inhabitants). 49 km east of Nikopol and 71 km from Roussé. A modern Danubian port, third in importance after Roussé and Lom. In Ottoman days Svishtov was a thriving centre of international trade. It was here that the main Russian forces crossed the Danube and landed on Bulgarian soil during the Russian-Turkish war of 1877.

It is a rapidly developing industrial centre, mainly food factories.

Svishtov is one of the five University centres of the country. It is the home-town of the great Bulgarian humourist Aleko Konstantinov, whose house has been preserved as a museum.

Objects of interest: the Sveta Troitsa cathedral built by the eminent self-taught architect of his days, Nikola Fichev, in an interesting style and with realistic paintings by our first academic artist — Nikolai Pavlovich; the Church of St. Dimiter with its ancient church-school; the clock tower built in 1780 by the master-mason Bogdan; old warehouses and caravanserais with strong iron-sheathed gates, reviving memories of what in the past used to be a thriving economic centre.

The ruins of the ancient town Nove have been discovered about 3 km east of the town.

Svishtov is a terminus of the Troyan-Lovech-Levski-Svishtov railway line. Linked by good roads to Roussé (71 km). Turnovo (79 km), Levski (44 km), Pleven (87 km).

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Rodina — 12, Tsanko Tserkovski St., Tel. 286,
Septemvri — 2, Tsanko Tserkovski St., Tel. 289.

R e s t a u r a n t s: Slaviani — 2, Chervenka Ploshtad (Red Square), Tel. 56;

Dounav — 12, Tsanko Tserkovski St., Tel. 81.

M u s e u m : National Museum — 5, Klokotnitsa St.

T r a n s p o r t: Bus station — 1, Svoboda Square, Tel. 184

Petrol station — 194, Tsar Osvoboditel St., Tel. 253.

Roussé (83,472 inhabitants). The biggest port and most attractive Bulgarian city on the Danube near the mouth of the Roussenski Lom River. 15 hours by boat from Vidin. Northern terminus of the trans-Balkan railway line.

The history of the town goes far back into antiquity. In the 2nd century of our era (rule of the Roman Emperor Trajan), the Romans built the port and fortress of Sexaginta Prista (City of sixty galleys). In Ottoman days Roussé was preserved as a fortified strategic point mainly for the favourable location of the commercial port. During the National Revival period it became the centre of the Bulgarian revolutionary activity against Ottoman rule.

The city is mainly in a late Viennese baroque style, its buildings rich in ornaments, figures, towers and graceful domes. Among the most remarkable buildings: the People's Council, the National Theatre with its stylish side towers, and the Higher Institute for the Mechanization and Electrification of Farming, with an impressive colonnade.

Roussé has grown into the fourth important industrial centre, mainly mechanical engineering, metal-processing and textiles; the big «Georgi Dimitrov» Works for agricultural machinery, the «Naiden Kirov» plant for electric insulators, the «Vassil Kolarov» rolling stock works, and shipbuilding and repair yards.

The Bridge of Friendship spanning the Danube between the Bulgarian and Rumanian banks is an outstanding engineering achievement. It is the biggest bridge in Europe — 2224 m long, built in 37 sections, with a central draw-section to allow for the passage of bigger vessels at high water. It is two-storied, an asphalt highway above with pavements for pedestrians, and a railway line below.

In the main square of the town, from which eighteen streets spread out fanwise, there is a high Statue of Liberty — the work of the Italian artist Arnolfo Zocci.

Here too is the new Dounav Hotel built by Balkantourist — a many-storied building faced with white Roussé stone.

At the entrance to the Park of Culture, there is an impressive monument dedicated to the Soviet Army, opposite the stylish white building of the Cultural Centre.

Roussé has an Archaeological Museum with a rich collection, the «Baba Tonka» Museum of the national-liberation period, a National Theatre, National Opera (the biggest provincial opera in the country), a State Symphony Orchestra, and an Art Gallery.

The Youth Park is on the banks of the Danube.

Some 14 km outside the town is the new Lipnika Park, right in the forest. There are many villas, chalets, hotels, restaurants, and a sports stadium seating 25,000.

Roussé is the frontier station on the railway line to Rumania. The Bridge of Friendship over the Danube establishes direct communications with Eastern, Central and Western Europe.

By air: Roussé-Varna — 25 minutes;

Roussé-Gorna Oryahovitsa — 12 minutes.

Roussé-Sofia — 80 minutes.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l s: Balkantourist — Tel. 47-19;

Bulgaria — 9, Yanko Sakuzov St., Tel. 26-17;

Dounav — 20, Slavianska St., Tel. 30-38;

Moskva — 5, Hristo G, Danov St., Tel. 28-94;

Republika — 1, Yanko Sakuzov St., Tel. 28-37;

Sofia — 12, Tolboukhin St., Tel. 26-41.

R e s t a u r a n t s: Prista — 3, Sredets St., Tel. 32-18;

Bulgaria — Tel. 28-19

Dounavski Kut — Aleya na Vazrazhdane, Tel. 44-41;

Buzludja — Tel. 20-59;

Dounav — 10, Slavianska St., Tel. 29-88.

T h e a t r e s: National Theatre — Deveti Septemvri Square, Tel. 25-09;

National Opera — 12, Hristo Botev St., Tel. 25-09;

Concert Bureau — 41, D. Blagoev St., Tel. 31-94.

Museums: National Museum — 4, D. Blagoev St., Tel. 27-97;

Baba Tonka Museum — near the port.

The Art Gallery — 3, Sredets St., Tel. 44-57.

Transport: Shipping agency — Tel. 28-45;

Railway Travel and TABSO Airways Bureau — Tsanko Tserkovski St., Tel. 28-15;

Bus station — 14, Rila St., Tel. 29-74;

Taxis — Tel. 43-62 and 24-19;

Petrol Station — 4, Levski St., Tel. 22-42;

1, Sveti Naum St., Tel. 31-62;

Car repairs — 52, Tsar Osvoboditel Boulevard, Tel. 47-01.

From Roussé a good road to the east follows the bank of the Danube to Toutrakan and Silistra.

Toutrakan (9,577 inhabitants). 60 km east of Roussé by road. Three hours by boat. The town is amphitheatrically situated on high ground facing the river, among vineryards and orchards.

Toutrakan has the biggest Bulgarian fishing fleet on the Danube. A viticultural centre. Workshops for fishing boats.

Toutrakan has an Archaeological Museum. Monuments in memory of the men fallen in the Russo-Turkish War of Liberation.

To the east of Toutrakan one can see the embankment of the Aidemir drainage system, which has drained nearly 20,000 acres of swamps.

Sreburna. 18 km from Silistra by road. The beautiful Sreburna Lake and its jungle-like vegetation abounding in rare species of bird life has been turned into a national reservation. Here one can find pink pelikans, wild duck, water swallows, geese, etc. A favourite haunt of tourists, natural scientists, hunters and fishermen. The Lake spreads over an area of 15 sq. km, and is 8 metres deep.

Silistra (20,492 inhabitants). To the east of Toutrakan, 3 hours by boat down the Danube, and 67 km by road. Founded two thousand years ago by the Thracians the town was called by

the Romans *Durostorum* (the Stronghold). During the Middle Ages the Bulgarians named it *Druster*. Its present name has come down to us from the days of Ottoman rule. The remains of the ancient fortress have been preserved to our days.

Silistra is a big port on the Danube, the most attractive city in the Dobroudja Plain, and next to Tolboukhin in size. There are big concrete grain silos, a thermo-power station, factories for ceramics, furniture and other industrial plants. Also a fishing and viticultural centre. Many of our country's grape and wine exports go through the Danubian port of Silistra.

The town has a National Theatre and an Archaeological Museum.

A unique monument of the 3rd or 4th centuries A.D. has been discovered in the town itself — a Roman tomb with fine murals representing human figures and other objects, characterising the life and artistic achievements of the Romans during this distant epoch.

There are good roads to *Toutrakan*, *Roussé* (127 km), *Kolarovgrad* (112 km), *Tolboukhin* (95 km).

Silistra is close to the Rumanian border, with a road leading across, to the Rumanian port of *Konstantza* on the Black Sea.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l: — 27, *D. Blagoev St.*, *Tel.* 279.

R e s t a u r a n t s: *Bulgaria* — 2, *Otets Paissi St.*, *Tel.* 87;
Zlatna Dobroudja — 8, *D. Blagoev St.*, *Tel.* 59.

M u s e u m: *National Museum* — 9, *Iliya Bluskov St.*, *Tel.* 255.

T r a n s p o r t: *The Port* — 4, *Pristanishtna St.*, *Tel.* 50;
Bus station — 62, *Ohrid St.*

Petrol station — 61, *D. Donchev St.*, *Tel.* 153;

Car repairs — 1, *Slaveikov Square*, *Tel.* 101.

Rousse—Corna Oryahovitsa—Turnovo—Dryanovo— Tulovo — Stara Zagora

(by rail and road)

The Port of *Roussé* on the Danube is linked with Central and South Bulgaria by the railway line *Roussé-Gorna Oryahovitsa-Stara Zagora*, and by road via *Turnovo* — the Repub-

lika Pass-Nova Zagora. A fine road also leads from Turnovo through Gabrovo, over the Shipka Pass, to Kazanluk and Stara Zagora.

Rousse (see p. 84)

Byala (7,884 inhabitants). A railway station, 53 km by road south from Roussé, on the banks of the Yantra River. During the Russian-Turkish War of Liberation (1877-1878) it was the headquarters of the Commander in Chief of the Russian army. Today the house has been preserved as the Alexander III Museum.

As one approaches the town there is a fine old stone bridge built by the self-taught architect of his days, Nikola Fichev — a high achievement of building talent during the National Revival epoch, with original foundations and overhead span.

After reaching Gorna Oryahovitsa Junction the railway line runs south towards Turnovo through the Dervent gorge, following the right bank of the Yantra River. Midway one can see from the train the two old Preobrazhenski and Sveta Troitsa monasteries, facing each other on each side of the rocky narrow defile.

Leaving the gorge, the train stops at the Trapezitsa Station in Turnovo.

Turnovo (See p. 85)

From Turnovo the most convenient road from North to South Bulgaria runs along the Belitsa River, crossing the Republika Pass, and on to Nova Zagora. At the village of Gurkovo it joins the main Sub-Balkan highway. There is also a separate road to Stara-Zagora.

Dryanovo (5,400 inhabitants). 21 km from Turnovo by road. An old highland town with quaint old houses with fine wood-carved decorations. One of them has been preserved as a museum. Site of the «Andrei Zhdanov» Railway Carriage Works.

The Dryanovski Monastery, 4 km from the town along the railway line is famous for the heroic stand of the rebel detachment led by Bacho Kiro and priest Hariton, surrounded by superior Turkish forces in the pre-liberation days. The famous Bacho Kiro cave, only a few hundred metres from the monastery, now has electric lighting.

A new Tourist Centre is being built in the mountainside near Dryanovo. But even now there is a chalet with a restaurant,

which can accommodate 100 travellers. Its three terraces have a splendid view of the river and the surrounding country.

At the Vurbanovo Station a line branches off to Gabrovo.

Tryavna (5,949 inhabitants). Railway station. A climatic mountain resort, famous for its old artists, which in their days founded the so-called Tryavna Woodcarving School. Fine architectural monuments have been preserved to our days; the clock tower, old houses (particularly the Daskalova House) churches, bridges and fountains. The Woodcarving Technical College keeps up the local traditions. The town has an open air swimming pool.

South of the town the railway line climbs up the Balkan Range, reaching the high divide before it descends towards the Dubovo Station, which is a junction for the Sub-Balkan line. Here one can change and take a train running east towards Bourgas on the Black Sea coast; west through the Valley of Roses to Sofia; or continue southwards to Stara Zagora and Plovdiv.

Sofia—Pernik—Radomir—Kyustendil

(by rail and road)

The railroad and highway leaving Sofia pass through the colourful Vladaya Gorge, formed by the Vitosha and Lyulin Mountains.

Pernik (59,751 inhabitants). It is 30 km west of Sofia by rail and road. There was an old medieval fortress in the locality, where the Bulgarian bolyar Krakra Pernishki defended the pass against Byzantine incursions.

Pernik has become a major centre of Bulgarian heavy industry and is in the biggest coal basin of the country. The first Bulgarian Lenin Metallurgical Works, has been built in its vicinity. It has a Republika thermoelectric-power station, a pectin factory, a Kristal glass factory, a Machine-Building Works, and others.

Many new buildings have been put up since 1944, such as the Culture Palace, a National Theatre, sports stadium, park with an artificial lake. Pernik has a symphony orchestra and a Museum of the Revolutionary Movement.

The elevation where the fortress of bolyar Krakra Pernishki once stood has been turned into attractive parkland with a modern restaurant.

Other places of tourist interest in the vicinity of Pernik: the Stoudena irrigation dam, the Roudartsi climatic resort near the village of Kladnitsa, with a hot mineral water pool, sand for sunbathing and a fish pond.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l: Balkan — in the square facing the RR station, Tel. 261

R e s t a u r a n t: Balkan — in the RR station Square, Tel. 106;

Krakra Pernishki — Krakra Square, Tel. 99

T h e a t r e s: National Theatre — A. Milenov Boul. (in the Culture Club), Tel. 316

M u s e u m: Museum of the Revolutionary Movement, Tel. 392.

T r a n s p o r t: Bus Station — Krakra Square;
Car repairs — Tel. 32-46.

Radomir (6,709 inhabitants). 12 km from Pernik. Famous for the big Soldiers' Rebellion, which broke out at the end of the First World War.

From Radomir a railway line branches off to Stanké Dimitrov — Blagoevgrad — Sandanski — Kulata (on the Greek border). A road to the north towards Breznik and Trun.

Near Radomir is the village of Kovachevtsi — birth place of Georgi Dimitrov, with a monument dedicated to the great leader of the Bulgarian people.

Zemen. A climatic resort on the slopes of the Koniavska Mountain. A fruit growing and agricultural region. The Zemenski Monastery, built in the 14th century, has interesting old murals.

KYUSTENDIL (24,876 inhabitants). 45 km from Radomir and 86 km south-west of Sofia, in the foothills of the Ossogovo Mountain.

The town is built on the site of the ancient Roman fortress of Pautalia. One can see the ruins of a splendid temple Asclepion (a shrine of the god of medicine Aesculapius and the goddess Hygia).

Kyustendil and the plane around is one of the main fruit growing regions in the country (particularly apples and plums) with factories for jams and marmalades. Greenhouses for early vegetables.

The town has about 40 mineral springs and a big balneological centre with different physiotherapeutic departments. There are many rest and holiday homes, hotels and restaurants. The temperature of the mineral waters reaches up to 75°C, and are prescribed for the treatment of disturbances of the digestive tract, the respiratory and genital organs, kidneys, rheumatic affections of the muscles and joints, fractures of the bone and chronic diseases of the skin.

Kyustendil has a National Theatre and a local museum accommodated in the old Ahmed Bey Turkish mosk. Also an Art Gallery with a good collection of the works of People's Artist Vladimir Dimitrov («The Master»).

There is a good asphalt road to the Hissarluka Hill Park, with a modern restaurant and terraces among a pine forest.

The road to the town of Stanké Dimitrov (45 km) is also asphalted.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l: Moskva — Tel. 134

R e s t a u r a n t s: Moskva — Tel. 119;

Republika — Yantra Street, Tel. 135.

T h e a t r e: National Theatre — Tel. 340

M u s e u m: National Museum — the old Ahmed Bey Turkish mosk at the corner of H. Smirnenski and S. Karadja Streets, Tel. 182.

**Sofia—Stanke Dimitrov—Kocherinovc—Rila Monastery—Blagoevgrad—Simitli—Sandanski—Melnik—
Petrich**

(by rail or road)

This parallel railway and road route follows the valley of the River Strouma — through Blagoevgrad and Sandanski to Kulata on the Greek border. Starting from Sofia, the road passes through Knyazhevo and the Vladaya Gorge, formed by the Vitosha and Lyulin Mountains; then on to the villages of Vladaya and Daskalovo, where it forks off to the south.

Seven kilometres from the village of Daskalovo the road passes by the Stoudena dam, whose waters feed the Republika Thermo-electric Power Station, as well as by the Lenin Metallurgical Works and the pectin plant.

Stanké Dimitrov (25,137 inhabitants). 68 km from Sofia in the narrow valley of the Dzherman River flowing from the Rila Mountain. The town has been named after the well known social worker Stanké Dimitrov-Marek, whose house has now been turned into a museum.

Stanké Dimitrov is an important tobacco growing centre, where many valuable sorts of home-grown tobaccos are processed in modern warehouses, drying plants and factories. It has also developed into an industrial centre; flour mills, sunflower seed refineries, wood-processing, viticulture and fruit growing.

The town now enjoys many modern amenities, parks and gardens, new bridges and a new mineral water bath. In the town square there is a monument dedicated to Stanké Dimitrov-Marek. Also a sports stadium seating 8,000. A Tourist Club in the vicinity of the town.

There are good roads to Kyustendil (39 km) and Samokov (39 km).

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l: Moskva — Tel. 193

R e s t a u r a n t: Republika — Tel. 3

T r a n s p o r t: Petrol Station — 24, Georgi Bachkov Street, Tel. 109

Car repairs — 4, Vassil Kolarov St.

Sapareva Banya. A balneological and climatic resort on the Samokov road, 14 km east of Stanké Dimitrov. Situated in a highland hollow at the northern foothills of the Rila Mountain (725 m above sea level) and well known for its mineral springs from antique times. Recent excavations have discovered the fortified Roman settlement of Germanea. A well-preserved church from Byzantine days.

The resort has been modernized and has a new bath and balneosanatorium. The water source, with a temperature of 86°C,

is one of the hottest in Europe. The waters of Sapareva Banya are prescribed with good effect for the treatment of affections of the vaso-motor system, inflammations of the peripheral nervous system, gynaecological disturbances, skin diseases, and others. The abundance of fruits makes it ideal for a fruit-cure.

A new mineral spring was discovered in 1957 with a water temperature of 102°C — like a geyzer spouting alternately boiling jets of water and vapours.

The Sapareva Banya Spa is a convenient starting point for outings in the Rila Mountain, particularly to the Panichishte Lake, the waterfalls near the Skakavitsa Chalet, the Seven Rila Lakes and the Sedemte Ezera chalet built in their vicinity.

There is a regular bus line to Stanké Dimitrov and Samokov (24 km).

South of Stanké Dimitrov the road and railway line cross the Kocherinovo Gorge, lying between the Rila and Ossogovo Mountains, and lead to the small Kocherinovo plain (370 m above sea level) known for its mild climate and fertile soil growing high grade tobacco and cotton, fine grapes and other fruits.

Kocherinovo. Railway station. A road from the village of Kocherinovo leads to Rila Monastery through the forested valley of the Rila River. There is a regular bus service to the Rila Monastery (28 km).

Rila Monastery. 52 km from Stanké Dimitrov and 122 km from Sofia by road. Built in a beautiful fold of the Rila Mountain, 1147 m above sea level and surrounded by giant mountain peaks.

The Rila Monastery was founded in the 10th century by the recluse monk Ivan Rilsky and is the biggest national monument in the country. Throughout the ages it has been a hearth which has helped preserve our national spirit and culture. In 1335 the bolyar Hrelyo, ruler of the land around the Strouma part of Macedonia, rebuilt the Monastery and erected a strong tower in the Monastery courtyard. Set on fire several times during foreign invasions and under Ottoman rule, the Monastery was always restored, and is now a tribute to old Bulgarian architecture and artistic talent.

The Monastery is a four-storied building with about 300 rooms. The chapel of the Holy Virgin is remarkable for its

exquisite murals and woodcarvings — with a wealth of themes drawn mainly from everyday life. The central iconostasis is an exclusive achievement of old Bulgarian woodcarving skill.

The library of Rila Monastery has a collection of valuable documents, old books, about 140 old Slav manuscripts.

The Monastery itself lets rooms to tourists staying overnight or stopping for a rest. Right next to the Monastery there is a new Balkantourist Hotel and Restaurant, from whose terraces there is the finest view of the mountainside around.

Near the monastery again is the grave of the well-known English journalist and friend of Bulgaria, James David Burchier.

The Rila Monastery is the most frequented object of tourist interest in the country. The coach service run by Balkantourist takes travellers from Sofia to the Monastery in about 4 hours.

The Monastery is a starting point for excursions to the Rila Mountain chalets of Malyovitsa, Ribni Ezera (Fish Lakes) and Sedemté Ezera (Seven Lakes).

Blagoevgrad (21,936 inhabitants). 102 km from Sofia and 36 km from Stanké Dimitrov. It is the leading economic and cultural centre in the Pirin Mountain region. The town is situated in a plain, 4 km east of the Strouma River, and has been named after the founder of socialism in Bulgaria, Dimiter Blagoev. A new modern plant for the fermentation and processing of the famous Gorna Djoumaya sorts of tobacco was built. In Macedonia Square there is a monument dedicated to Gotsé Delchev, one of the eminent leaders of the Macedonian National Liberation movement; also a bust of the well known Party member and statesman, Vladimir Poptomov.

Blagoevgrad has a National Theatre, a State Ensemble for Macedonian Folk Songs and Dances, a Symphony Orchestra and a National Museum.

Blagoevgrad is a main station on the line Sofia-General Todorov-Petrich. The international road Sofia-Salonica passes through the town with another branching off for Shtip (Yugoslavia).

TRAVEL FACILITIES

H o t e l: Volga — 2, Georché Petrov Street, Tel. 183

R e s t a u r a n t s: Volga — 2, Georché Petrov, Tel. 157;

M o s k v a — 1, Yarebichka Street, Tel. 257.

P i r i n — Makedonia Square, Tel. 158.

T h e a t r e: National Theatre, 2, Tolboukhin Street, Tel. 5.

M u s e u m: National Museum — 7, Makedonia Square, Tel. 152.

T r a n s p o r t: Bus Station — Tel. 161

Petrol Station — Tel. 164;

Car repairs — 23, Dimiter Atsev St.

Some 40 km from Blagoevgrad, in the southern foothills of the Rila Mountain is the Parangalitsa Forest, one of the most beautiful in the country, abounding in game. It has been proclaimed a national reservation.

Simitli. A railway station, 18 km from Blagoevgrad. From here there is a road branching off through Predel to Razlog. The village has about 30 mineral springs and a bath with a pool.

Predel. 38 km from Simitli and 18 km from Razlog. A climatic resort on the high divide (1142 m above sea level) between the Rila and Pirin Mountains. There is a Balkantourist hotel. A regular bus service between Simitli, Predel and Razlog.

South of Simitli, near the station of Kroupnik, the railway and road enter the picturesque 25-km long Kresnenska Gorge, rising high on each side, interspersed with dense woodland. The Strouma River wriggles under the rocky banks following the railway line.

At the Pirin station the Gorge fans out into the plain, and one feels immediately the breath of the warm South.

Sandanski. (10,554 inhabitants). The town is in a sheltered hollow on the southern slopes of the Pirin Mountain. The climate is moderate and it is a district known for the cultivation of tobacco, cotton and peanuts. It has the most extensive greenhouses in Bulgaria using the hot waters of the local mineral springs. There is a State Farm and experimental station for crops growing in warmer climates.

The warm mineral sources and the mild climate have helped the growth of the town into a winter season balneological resort (known by the name Sveti Vrach), with a department for mud baths. There is also an open air swimming pool with warm mineral water. Travellers are accommodated in a good local hotel. In the park with fine old plane trees there is a bust of the poet P. Yavorov.

Sandanski has a National Museum with a collection of interesting historical monuments found in the valley of the

Strouma River, among which a Roman inscription that has aroused international interest.

Melnik (529 inhabitants). The smallest town in the land, some 20 km from Sandanski by road. It lies in a deep hollow surrounded by tall vertical sandstone cliffs, giving it a unique beauty. Interesting old houses built in original style, keeping their precarious foothold on the slopes.

The town has been turned into a national reservation because of its numerous architectural monuments, church murals, wood-carved interior decorations, old icons, etc. The so-called Tsin-tsarova house is a point of particular interest to the traveller. It has a big wine cellar under the house, tunnelling into the hill. In the town there are ruins of ancient fortress walls (in places 3 m thick).

Life has been rapidly picking up in this quaint little mountain town. Its old monuments are being restored. An old trade—wine making and fruit growing is again being encouraged on an industrial scale.

The house where the great Macedonian revolutionary Yané Sandanski once lived has been preserved as a museum.

Some 6 km from the town is the Rozhenski Monastery and in the proximity the grave of Yané Sandanski. The famous Melnik Pyramids — north east of the town are the most famous of their kind in Bulgaria.

Petrich (16,462 inhabitants). 25 km from Sandanski by road is the warmest lowland in Bulgaria, at the approaches to the Belassitsa Mountain.

The old clock tower has been preserved as a fine historical monument.

Petrich district grows tobacco, cotton, poppies and peanuts. Its peaches, early strawberries, vegetables and grapes have become leading items of our export trade.

In the vicinity of the town one can see the ruins of King Samuil's fortress tower.

To the southwest of the Petrich lowland spread the Podgorié dense woods of chestnut trees.

To the south of the General Todorovo railway station, the Strouma line reaches the border town of Kulata, and then on into Greek territory to Salonica.

Sofia—Pancharevo—Isker Dam—Samokov—Borovets Dolna Banya—Kostenets Station

(on the Sofia-Plovdiv RR line).

From Sofia there is a fine highway (paved and asphalted) through Samokov (61 km) to Borovets Resort (71 km). It passes through the colourful Pancharevo Gorge, carved out of the rock by the longest river in Bulgaria — the Isker — which at Isker Dam forms one of the biggest hydro-electric power centres in the country.

The road to Samokov follows the international highway Sofia-Plovdiv-Istanbul, and at the 9th kilometre turns right towards Samokov. At this junction there is a modern petrol station.

Pancharevo. (see p. 25). Near the village of Pancharevo there is a new 5-km long lake, storing 7 million cubic metres of water. On the banks of the lake there are restaurants, tea rooms and snack bars, different pavilions, water sports bases and several beaches.

Between Pancharevo and the Passarel Hydro Power Station the ruins of the old Bulgarian fortress of Urvich are of considerable interest. This fortification is related to the reign of the Bulgarian king Ivan Shishman and linked with historical tales and legends.

At the 38th km the eye meets the great stretch of water formed by the lake behind the great wall of the Isker Dam.

The whole region around the Isker Dam is being transformed into a summer resort of the Bulgarian Capital, where about 50 to 60,000 citizens come every weekend or holiday. On the banks of the lake there are many new villas and holiday homes, while the little creeks have been turned into convenient bases for water sports, sailing boats, scooters, rowing, swimming, etc.

On the lake of the dam there is a cozy Balkantourist restaurant — Shturkelovo gnezdo (Storck's Nest) — with colourful bungalows right by for travellers stopping for a short rest, or staying overnight.

In the lake there is carp, trout and pike, and certain parts of it are specially preserved for angling.

Samokov (16,917 inhabitants). Near the northern approaches to the Rila Mountain. An old town deriving its name from the huge drop-hammers used during the early days of the ore-

mining industry. In Ottoman times Samokov was a thriving centre of the artisan crafts, with an ore mining and pig iron industry. The town had a famous school of iconographers towards the end of the 18th century. Among them its founders — the artists Hristo Dimitrov, and his sons Dimiter Zograph and Zahari Zograph. Samokov is the birthplace of other eminent artists of our National Revival epoch, such as Stanislav Dospevski and Nikola Obrazopissov.

In the old days Samokov also had engraving and woodcarving schools for copper work, and for fine woodcarved church iconostases, ceilings, furniture and interior decoration.

Among the more interesting historical monuments in the town: the old stone fountain, several churches with fine icons and iconostases of the 18th and 19th centuries, interesting archaeological finds and ethnographic materials, works of the Samokov artists — displayed in the local museum.

There are several enterprises of light industry, the biggest of which is the «Samokovska Commouna», textile factory for woollens, worsteds and blankets.

Samokov is the main centre for excursions to the eastern and north-western parts of the Rila Mountains — Moussala peak, Malyovitsa peak, and the mountain resorts of Borovets (10 km) and Govedartsi (13 km).

Samokov lies 37 km from the Kostenets Station (on the railway line Sofia-Plovdiv), and 43 km by road, from Stanke Dimitrov.

Govedartsi Resort. A little village in an attractive mountain setting on the banks of the Cherni Isker River (1160 m above sea level). Right above the village there are several modern rest homes in the pine forest, many villas and fine skiing grounds where some of our national championships and international meets are held. Govedartsi is a good starting point for excursions to the mountain chalets of Mehit (2 hours), Malyovitsa (4 hours), the Seven Lakes (4 hours), Skakavitsa (5 hours). There is now a new good automobile road from the village to the Central Mountaineering School passing through Giolechitsa. Govedartsi has a hotel and restaurant. A bus service to Samokov twice daily.

Belchin Spa. 12 km by road from Samokov and 31 km from Stanke Dimitrov; near the village of Belchin in the valley

of the Palikaria River. A balneological and climatic resort of local importance. The waters of its pool, with a temperature of 40°C , are prescribed for the treatment of nervous disturbances. It is also taken as drinking water for dysentery, inflammations of the large intestins, and rheumatic affections. A new balneological establishment is at present under construction. The new spa has a hotel and restaurant.

Borovets Resort. A highland resort 71 km by road from Sofia, 37 km from the Kostenets Station and 49 km from Stanke Dimitrovo. It is climatic resort 1300 m above sea level, among dense forests of fir and pine, on the northern slopes of the Rila Mountains. Within the bounds of the Borovets resort there are more than 170 rest homes and villas, several skiing grounds, a lake with a rink for skating and ice-hockey, a jumping hill, sleigh-runs, etc. which have lately turned into a first class centre for winter sports and international competitions. Borovets stages the annual Republican Skiing Championships.

The former Royal palaces and hunting lodges near Borovets, Bistritsa, Sitnyakovo and Sara Gyol are now rest and holiday homes of our workers in the field of art and culture.

At Borovets there is a new Balkantourist hotel and restaurant, and a second is opened, with cozy rooms and suites, lounge rooms, restaurant, banqueting hall, tea-rooms etc.

There is an asphalt road from Borovets to the Kostenets Station through the pleasant valley of the Slivnitsa River, and after the village of Radouil — following the banks of Maritsa River.

Dolna Banya. A highland resort 630 m above sea level in the fertile valley of the River Dolnobanska Bistritsa. In close proximity to the Maritsa River. Two mineral water sources and its closeness to the Rila Mountains, have helped Dolna Banya develop into a climatic and balneological resort, with mineral water pools. Its waters, spouting at a temperature of 56.2°C , are used with good effect in the treatment of the respiratory organs, nervous system, skin diseases and genital affections. There are several rest homes and villas to the south of the village in the foothills of the Rila Mountains.

There is a regular bus service to Borovets (19 km) and Kostenets Station (8 km), on the Sofia-Plovdiv line.

The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast.

The Black Sea forms the Bulgarian border to the east. It is the Pontos Euxinus (Hospitable Sea) of Hellenistic times, driving its present name from the dark hue of its waters after the sun sets.

The Bulgarian seaside has a moderate climate, with a gentle breeze blowing inland that holiday-makers find agreeable and refreshing. The average temperature of the sea along the Bulgarian coastline, during the summer season is 25-30°C. There are only insignificant changes in the overnight weather temperatures.

There is little rainfall during the holiday season, and any date between the middle of May and mid-October is a good time for a pleasant seaside holiday or cure.

There is no tide, no dangerous fish, so that seabathing, swimming far out and boating is always only a pleasant sensation.

All along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast there is an endless string of beaches with the finest golden sand, hardly rivalled in the world. The bottom of the sea is sandy, sloping gently inward from the beaches.

The landscape is most attractive — the rugged rocks at Cape Kaliakra, white cliffs of Balchik, the dense woodland on the hills right behind the Golden Sands resort, the eastern slope of the Balkan Range creeping into the sea at Obzor near Cape Eminé; the desert-like dunes at Nessebur, the picturesque islands around Sozopol, the massive Capes of Agalina and Maslen, the sheltered creeks denting the last slopes of the Strandja Mountain near the little town of Michurin. . .

Man's creative genius has added new beauty to the coast. In the last several years entirely new seaside resorts have been built along the coast: the number of modern hotels, restaurants and rest homes, built by Balkantourist, the Trade Union and other departments and services has been rapidly increasing — all in graceful modern lines and offering every comfort. The sun, sand and water have an exceedingly beneficial effect in the treatment of anaemia, glands, skin eruptions, bronchial asthma, asthmatic and ordinary bronchitis, hypertonia, neurasthenia, disturbed metabolism, etc.

The comforts and services of the Balkantourist hotels and restaurants, facilities for sports, excursions, boating and recreation make a holiday at the Bulgarian seaside resorts an

experience that one can well look forward to. An abundance of fruit and vegetables for all coming to the seaside for fruit cure.

Seaside resorts and objects of tourist interest on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast

Varna (137,000 inhabitants). Third biggest city in the country after Sofia and Plovdiv in the attractive sheltered Bay of Varna.

The first settlement was founded in the 6th century B.C. by Greek seafarers and traders from the town of Miletus in Asia Minor, who gave it the name of Odessus, in honour of their legendary hero, Odysseus. It developed rapidly into a thriving commercial port, but its wealth and splendour were the cause of several invasions. At present Varna boasts the «Georgi Dimitrov» shipyards, building ships not only for the Bulgarian merchant marine, but also executing foreign orders. The dry dock repairing ships is equipped with most modern installations.

Varna is the centre of an important viticultural and fruit growing region.

The city has broad boulevards, numerous parks and gardens, many cultural and educational institutions — a National Theatre, Opera House, a State Symphony Orchestra, National Library, an open-air theatre, a Puppet Theatre, a Ballet School, an Art Gallery, a Higher Institute for Rural Economy, a Teachers' College for post-graduate work, technical colleges, etc.

There are interesting relics of the eventful history of the town, preserved in the Archaeological, Naval, Revolutionary and other museum.

The Aquarium to the right of the Seaside Park is one of the most interesting sights, showing the flora and fauna of the Black Sea.

There are many historical monuments, some from the remotest antiquity. The Roman tower that has remained to our days used to form part of a monumental Acropolis, built in the 6th century. In the Fraternal Burial Mound, just outside the town, there is an ossuary containing the relics of heroes fallen in the fight against fascism.

Right next to the main beach, there is a big bath with balneological sections with artificially heated sea water and for applications with the curative mud brought from the Touzla Lake near Balchik. This balneological centre is prescribed for the treatment of rheumatism, sciatica, lumbago and other affections under the control of specialists.

Varna has good communications by air, land and water. During the summer season there are planes from Sofia to Varna leaving at half-hour intervals (flight of 90 minutes). It takes 12 hours by rail over the northern Sofia-Gorna Oryahovitsa-Kolarovgrad-Varna line, or the alternate Sub-Balkan line Sofia-Karlovo-Kazanluk-Sliven-Karnobat-Varna. There is a fine asphalt road from Sofia to Varna, with petrol stations at convenient spots, working round the clock.

TRAVEL FACILITIES

Balkantourist (Office) — 1, Moussala St., Tel. 32-56.

Balkantourist (Travel Bureau) — 2, Deveti Septemvri Boulevard; Tel. 34-16.

Balkantourist hotels: Bulgaria — 3, Moussala St., Tel. 24-38;

Moussala — 1, Moussala St., Tel. 26-02

Balkantourist restaurant: Bulgaria — 24, Deveti Septemvri St. Tel. 23-62.

Theatres: National Theatre — Tel. 25-44;

National Opera — 2, D. Kondov St., Tel. 33-38;

Concert Bureau — 18, Deveti Septemvri St., Tel. 26-09

Museums: Archaeological — 7, Sheinovo St., Tel. 30-62;

Naval — The Seaside Park, Tel. 36-52;

The Revolutionary Movement — 2, Poushkin St., Tel. 27-85

Aquarium — The Seaside Park, Tel. 23-02.

Transport: TABSO airways — corner Shipka and Deveti Septemvri St. Tel. 29-48

RR Station (Information Bureau) Tel. 25-51;

RR tickets and sleeper bookings — 4, A. Gashev St.
Tel. 23-26.

Petrol stations: — 41, Sofroni Vrachanski St., Tel. 21-05
49, Gabrovo St., Tel. 49-86

Bus station: 18, Tsarigrad St., Tel. 31-14

Taxi: Deveti Septemvri Square, Tel. 22-33, 29-34

Objects of tourist interest in the vicinity of Varna

Varna Lake. West of the city, connected with a narrow canal with the sea. In close proximity — the Shkorpil Hill, named after the Czech geologist, Herman Shkorpil who spent long years of his life in the archaeological survey in Varna district. He discovered a very old monastery and in the crypt of the chapel three sarcophagi one inside the other, made of marble, silver and gold. They are now in the strong rooms of the local Bulgarian National Bank. To the north of the lake and only about 3 km outside the town there are two other Thracian burial mounds. On the one there is a monument built in honour of King Ladislaus Varnenczik III of Poland and Hungary, who led his army in order to liberate the town from the Turks (15 th century).

The villages of Topolite, Zvezditsa and Aladin, near the banks of the lake are other picturesque localities near the town.

Pobitite Kamuni (Dikilitash). 18 km west of the town, on the Varna-Sofia highway. The whole locality is interesting with its stone pillars. Some of the pillars are 5 metres high.

Aladja Monastery: The most popular spot for drive or an excursion in the environs of Varna. It lies 5 km from the Golden Sands resort, with a new asphalt road to the resort and the town itself.

The monastery was built during the 9th century right into the rocky cliff, among the dense forest. The recluse monks probably sought shelter and protection from hostile incursions.

It is being preserved as a historical monument of national interest.

There is an inviting restaurant with a wine cellar serving the famous Varna wines.

The Catacombs. 5 km west of the Aladja Monastery. In ancient days the monks built their cells in the interior of cavities in the rocky cliff.

The Golden Sands Chalet. In the woodland near the monastery, with a splendid view of the country around.

The village of Kranevo — to the north of the Golden Sands resort, on the Black Sea shore. There is an international Pioneer Camp every summer.

Longoza — South of Varna, on the road to Bourgas; picturesque country through which the Kamchiya River flows before reaching the sea. Tropical vegetation and creepers. A base for boating at the mouth of the river.

The chalet «Rodni Balkani». An hour and a half by water from Varna. Convenient for outings to the Kamchiya River and the Longoza.

There are regular coastal steamers to all places of tourist interest on the coast. They are also accessible by road. Most roads are asphalted.

The «Drouzhba» International Seaside Resort. Some 10 km from Varna by a fine asphalt highway winding among parkland and orchards along the coastline.

The famous international resort is in a big park of pine, beech and oak trees. Stairways of white bright stone lead straight to the beach.

Volleyball, basketball and tennis courts. Rowing.

The modern Balkantourist hotels have rooms with one, two, or three beds with private bath and terrace or balcony. Rooms for billiards, table tennis and chess. A reading room on every floor with Bulgarian and foreign papers and periodicals.

Drouzhba resort has several first class restaurants, bars and tea-rooms and other places for entertainment, with a cuisine serving Bulgarian and foreign favourites, and select Bulgarian wines. The «Albatros» tea-room has been built on an elevation giving a rare view of the sea and coastline.

The summer theatre, seating more than 1000, stages dramatic performances, concerts, etc.

There is a modern Balkantourist camping.

In the vicinity of the Drouzhba resort, right in the forest, is the former royal palace of Euxinograd. Its extensive park

grows rare plants from every corner of the country and many distant lands.

Several thousand foreign guests from Europe and all other continents come regularly to Drouzhba Resort for their holidays.

The «Golden Sands» International Seaside Resort.

17 km north of Varna and 8—9 km from the Drouzhba resort over a fine asphalt road running through colourful gardens and orchards. The roof and terraces of many modern villas and rest homes peep through the shady trees, among them the graceful lines of the rest home of the International Journalists' Organization.

The fame of the Golden Sands resort has spread far beyond the confines of the land. Cozy hotels perched like sea-gulls on the shore, built in three, four or more stories, in modern lines.

Right above, in the woodland beyond the last row of hotels, there are about 1,000 double-bedded bungalows for those who prefer greater privacy or would like to «keep home» closer to nature. Near the bungalows there is a special camping (Balkantourist).

The Casino, built on a terrace in the centre of the resort, can cater for 1,500 diners at one time. There is a stylish staircase, with flowers, plants and fountain, leading down to the beach. There are asphalt pathways from the Casino to the different hotels, restaurants and beaches.

Throughout the summer season there are first class Bulgarian and foreign dance orchestras and famous visiting jazz singers.

On the stage of the open-air theatre there are frequent performances by foreign singers, musicians, dramatic actors, etc. The best folk song and dance groups in the country delight visitors by their carefully selected programs.

But the greatest attraction is of course the long beach of fine golden sand and refreshing waters of the sea.

For the children there is a special pool with sea water and various amusements with small waterbikes, chutes, inflated rubber toys, etc.

In addition to the bus services from Varna to the Drouzhba and Golden Sands resorts, there are also little coastal steamers leaving the city at short intervals.

Balchik. (8,006 inhabitants) 40 km north of Varna by road, and 20 km from the Golden Sands resort, over a wide asphalt highway. Also on the line of the coastal steamers running from Varna at frequent intervals. Amphitheatrically located on the steep chalk hills above the shore. The «White City» on the Bulgarian coast, gleaming from afar as the steamer approaches, with rolling country behind.

While Balchik was under Rumanian rule (until 1940), the beautiful little palace of Tendja Yuva (the Lonely Nest) was built in distinctly oriental style. It has a nice park with fountains and running brooks, and rare plants and flowers. A terraced stairway leads to the beach below.

The mild climate, fine sand and water have turned Balchik into a first class resort, with many rest homes, villas, parks and gardens.

Balchik is one of the Bulgarian main fishing centres on the Black Sea coast.

Touzlata. 5 km north of Balchik over a fine asphalt road.

Touzlata is one of the newest resorts in the land, that has grown famous for its mud baths. There is a modern establishment for mud cures and on the shore a new balneosanatorium for the treatment of chronic rheumatism, neurologic, and gynaecological affections, skin diseases, etc.

Kavarna. (7,053 inhabitants). An hour by road from Balchik (to the north). Kavarna is a little town on the Black Sea coast, which has grown over the site of an ancient Greek and Thracian settlement. Agreeable country around, many new buildings, paved streets, flower gardens and a pleasant climate.

Cape Kaliakra. To the north of Kavarna, its majestic beauty drawing many tourists and motorists. The rocks hang over the water 70-80 metres and from the sea seem inaccessible. At the base of the rock there are caverns, where big families of seals have made their home (a rarity for the Black Sea). It was near Cape Kaliakra that the Russian Black Sea fleet under admiral Ushakov inflicted defeat on the Turkish fleet.

Shabla Village. North-east of Kavarna, somewhat inland. In the vicinity of this village of 9,000 were discovered the first Bulgarian oilfields, now in exploitation.

Varna—Obzor—Sunny Beach—Nessebur—Pomoriye— Bourgas—Sozopol—Primorskc—Michurin—Ahtopol

There is a whole chain of seaside resorts along the coast to the south of Varna.

Obzor. Beyond the Kamchiya River and the village of Byala. A very old settlement founded 2300 years ago as the ancient Greek colony of Aspro. Now a summer resort situated on the eastern slopes of the Balkan Range, where they plunge into the Black Sea. Fine country around, with forests, vineyards, orchards and vegeable gardens.

In Roman times the settlement was fortified. One can still see the ruins of the temple of Jupiter near the old Roman wall. Later, in medieval times, the feudal lord of the Dobroudja Plain, Dobrotich, built the Kozyak fortress, traces of which have remained to our days.

Obzor is a comparatively little but very popular seaside resort, and its rest homes, camps and private rooms let by the citizens accommodate thousands of holiday-makers during the season.

The coastal steamers on their regular run from Varna touch at the quay of Obzor. It is on the good asphalt road linking Varna with Sunny Beach, Nessebur, Pomoriye and Bourgas.

South of Obzor one can see Cape Eminé jutting far out into the sea. Here, near the ruins of the ancient Greek fortress of Paleocastro, there is a meteorological station. A little to the north is the little village of Emona.

The «Sunny Beach» International Seaside Resort.

Cape Eminé marks one end of the big Bay of Bourgas, with Sunny Beach just round the first bend in the coastline, to the south. It is the Bulgarian newest and most modern resort on the Black Sea coast, north of ancient Nessebur, in a spacious natural park. The modern hotels and bungalows, all built in the last few years, are in a style reminiscent of old Bulgarian architecture, forms and decrative effects. They are all tastefully furnished. Pleasant forest lanes and colourful flower gardens.

Sunny Beach resort has a number of first class restaurants, a casino, bars, an open-air theatre, many courts and playgrounds

for different sports and pastimes. Also a polyclinic with the free services of specialists advising a prescribed rest or cure.

The beach is big, with abundant sand and little desert dunes. The camels are here too, ready for those feeling in the mood to take a real desert photo.

Sunny Beach resort is still undergoing expansion, and a set of new hotels, restaurants, bungalows, places for entertainment, a swimming pool and a big Balkantourist camping site have recently come into existence.

There is a fine asphalt road to Varna and Bourgas and the interlying inhabited localities. As it is closer to Bourgas, motorists and travellers coming from Sofia are advised to use the Sofia-Bourgas road (fully asphalted and properly marked) and then turn towards Sunny Beach. There is an ample number of petrol stations along the road, working round the clock.

One can reach Sunny Beach from Bourgas by water. There is a regular coastal service to near-by Nessebur, from where it is only a very short drive to Sunny Beach by the regular bus service.

Nessebur. Built on a little peninsula connected with the mainland by 300 metres long isthmus. From afar gives the impression as if it were floating on the sea.

Nessebur is one of the oldest settlements on the Black Sea coast and in the country. It was founded in the 5th century before our era by Greek colonists and was given the name of Messembria — a «city in the sea».

In its long history, the town has known Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman rule. In 814, after a 14-day siege, the strongly fortified town was taken by the Bulgarian Khan Krum and given the name of Nessebur.

Visitors coming to the town are always attracted by the architectural beauty of its 40 ancient churches, many of them in a very good state of preservation, the ruins of old fortress walls and very old houses remindful of the late Middle Ages.

The churches were built of stone and brick, with rich ornamental effects and murals. The old houses with jutting bay-windows that seem to touch foreheads over the winding cobbled streets, and balconies in antique style impart a feeling of romance and unique beauty.

The rich collection of historical monuments and quaint architecture draw yearly thousands of tourists, archaeologists, historians and artists.

Special mention deserves to be made of the following churches: The Old Metropolitan Church of the 6th century — fine architecture; The New Metropolitan Church of St. Stefan — (11th c.) — exquisite woodcarvings;

The Church of St. Pantocrator (built between the 11th and 14th c.)

The Church of Joan the Baptist (11th to 14th c.) — now turned into a historical museum of the town. Earthen vessels were built into its walls for better acoustics.

A modern hotel of Balkantourist.

The new part of Nessebur has grown on the mainland on the other side of the narrow isthmus, with holiday homes of the Trade Union of Administrative Officials, the Central Council of the Bulgarian Trade Unions, and others.

The beach at Nessebur, on the southern side of the town, is among the very best on the Black Sea coast.

Pomoriye (6,000 inhabitants). A little town on the northern bend of the Bay of Bourgas. Founded in the 4th century by colonists coming from Apollonia (Sozopol). In its long and stormy history, it has known the passage of Romans, Goths, Slavs, Turks, and other invaders.

A viticultural district, producing the famous Pomoriye wine.

Pomoriye is also known for the curative properties of the mud deposits which are now used by the new modern local hospital.

All around the town there are many rest homes and a balneosanatorium.

Pomoriye is linked with Bourgas by an asphalt road, railroad and regular steamer service.

In the vicinity there is an experimental station for the cultivation of subtropical plants.

Bourgas (73,000 inhabitants). Well inside the Bay of Bourgas. Second biggest city on the Black Sea coast, after Varna. The Atanasköy Lake is to the north of the town and the Bourgas Lake — to the south-west. Bourgas is a comparatively young city, founded during the 18th century by fishermen sailing from Sozopol and Pomoriye and settling down. It has developed rapidly into a thriving port and a main industrial and commer-

cial centre, particularly because of its fine harbour and port equipment. The port has been expanded and further mechanized, and now handles the major part of the import and export trade of the country.

Bourgas has numerous factories: for electric cables, machine-building, railway trucks and carriages, textiles, confectionery, furniture, fish canneries and other food preserves, ceramics, etc.

Bourgas is the centre of good farming country: cereals, orchards and vegetable gardens spreading right to the shore.

During the last few years the town has also grown as a cultural centre. It has a Dramatic Theatre, Opera, State Symphony Orchestra, a big library, an archaeological museum and many schools, technical colleges and other educational institutions.

Bourgas is a pleasant, clean city, with asphalt or paved streets and boulevards, several parks and gardens. The only beach on the Bulgarian coast with dark grey sand, because of high iron and iodine content. Right next to the beach there is a modern bath and a water sports base for rowing, yachting and other sports.

On the shore, in the Seaside Park, Balkantourist has built a big modern hotel.

The famous Bourgas balneosanatorium built at the mineral water springs is some 15 km to the north-west of the town, over an asphalt road. The waters are known for the curative properties in the treatment of gynaecological, nervous and other disturbances.

The high rocks of Cape Ativolo is a favourite spot for an outing because of the fine view of the whole of the Bay — reaching Cape Eminé, and the towns of Nessebur, Pomoriye and Sozopol.

Boating on the three lakes near Bourgas — Mandrensko, Bourgasko and Atanasovsko — is another pleasant experience, particularly for anglers, for the lakes abound in fish. The thick reeds and vegetation along their banks have become the home of many different water fowls: wild duck, black storks, flamingos, and others.

The eastern slopes of the Strandja Mountain creep down to the very shore.

The fine Otmanli Park is 15 km to the south-east of Bourgas, on the road to the town of Michourin.

The little Bolshevik Island not far from the coast, is another point of tourist interest. Under fascist rule the old monastery

on the island had been turned into a political prison. Now one of the rooms has been preserved as a museum.

Bourgas is a convenient starting point for longer outings and excursions to places of interest: to Strandja Mountain, the exotic Ropotamo river, and to the "Diavolska, Veleka and Rezovska rivers, flowing into the Black Sea.

From Sofia one can reach Bourgas by air, railway and road. There is a fine highway Sofia-Plovdiv-Stara Zagora-Nova Zagora-Yambol-Karnobat-Bourgas, and then on to the seaside resorts of Sunny Beach and Nessebur, and those to the south of Bourgas — Sozopol, Primorsko, Michourin and Ahtopol

TRAVEL FACILITIES

Balkantourist (Office) — 3, G. Dimitrov St., Tel. 20-45

Balkantourist Travel Bureau — 1, Purvi Mai, Tel. 29-32

H o t e l s: Balkantourist — 16, Purvi Mai St., Tel. 29-83;

Primorets — 3, G. Dimitrov St., Tel. 22-38, 41-17;

R e s t a u r a n t s: Primorets — 3, G. Dimitrov, Tel. 41-44

Balkantourist — 16, Purvi Mai St., Tel. 29-83.

T h e a t r e s: National Theatre — Tsar Assen St., Tel. 31-21;

Open Air Theatre — the Seaside Park, Tel. 41-48;

Concert Bureau — Kiril i Metodi Square, Tel. 47-16.

T r a n s p o r t: TABSO Airlines — Tel. 26-05;

Petrol stations: in the «Pobeda» quarter on the road to the Rossen Mine, Tel. 44-65;

Isker St. Tel. 38-84.

Bus Station — Probuda Square, near the RR station

Car repairs — 6, Pirotka St., Tel. 20-31.

M u s e u m s: National Museum — Tel. 45-65.

Sozopol. (3,000 inhabitants). Built at the southern approach to the Bay of Bourgas on a small peninsula, over the ruins of ancient Apollonia Pontica founded in the beginning of the 7th century B. C. by Greek colonists from Miletus. The city flourished as a trading centre and grew into one of the most beautiful Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast.

Among the monuments found in the town, note should be made of a marble slab found over an ancient grave dating from the 6th century B.C. It is considered as a masterpiece of Ionian art.

Sozopol is a main fishing centre.

The old part of town, on the long narrow peninsula, has retained the aspect of ages past.

Sozopol has one of the finest beaches on the coast, drawing motorists and holiday-makers from all over the country and an increasing number of foreign guests. The «Kavatsite» beach near the town is in a sheltered little valley between the rocky capes of Christos and Agalina.

Further south, the exotic Ropotamo River flows into the sea. Its banks are thickly overgrown with creepers and jungle-like vegetation. Hundreds of dazzling white water lilies in places cover the gently flowing river. Boating on the Ropotamo has its peculiar fascinations.

A favourite spot for anglers, for the Ropotamo is rich in fish.

Beyond Cape Maslen Nos, cutting deep into the sea, flows the Dyavolska Reka River. Further south there are several settlements which in the last several years have developed into very popular seaside resorts: Primorsko, Kiten, Michourin, Ahtopol.

Primorsko. Because of its several fine beaches in the bay, woodland and river, Balkantourist has chosen Primorsko to build what will be one of the very biggest and most attractive summer resorts on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. There are several rest homes, built by the different Trade Unions and other departments.

There is an excellent new asphalt road from Bourgas, over picturesque country as well as a regular steamer service.

Michourin (3,000 inhabitants). A little town in a small bay formed by the last slopes of the Strandja Mountain as they dip into the sea. Its citizens are occupied mainly with fishing, viticulture and fruit growing: figs, lemons, oranges, etc.

There are shipyards building only small vessels. A popular summer resort because of its fine beach.

The near-by village of Bulgari has still preserved the pagan rite of fire dancing — the dancers treading barefoot on a bed of live coals.

Peak Papiya on the Strandja Mountain behind the town is only 502 m high, but there is good visibility and on clear days one can see the coastline to the south almost to the Bosphorus Strait at Istanbul.

Ahtopol. On the southernmost point along the Bulgarian Black Sea coastline, its citizens occupied with fishing or charcoal making. In the vicinity one can see the ruins of the old Byzantine fortress of Agatopolis (City of Happiness).

The Veleka River flows into the sea 6 km from the town, its banks covered with dense vegetation. An attractive haunt for tourists and anglers, its waters abounding in fish.

THE BULGARIAN MOUNTAINSIDE

Some of the most eventful periods in the history of the nation are closely linked with the native mountains. The names of Shipka Pass, Mt. Bouzloudja, the Oborishte mountain clearing and scores of others are all names crowned with unfading glory.

The rugged Rila and Pirin, the endless chain of the Balkan Range and the intricate maze of the Rhodope Mountains massif tower above attractive highland country.

There are good roads, and the Bulgarian mountains are accessible during all seasons of the year. Scores of chalets offer accommodation and service to lovers of the mountains. At all climatic mountain resorts there are numerous hotels, pensions and rest homes.

Rila Mountains

Occupying an area of 2396 sq. km in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula. Average altitude 1540 m; Moussala Peak 2925 m — highest point on the Balkans. Some 8.5 per cent of the mountain are in the Alpine belt (over 2300 m). Nineteen peaks over 2700 m above sea level; 59 — over 2500 m, and more than 50 — between 2000 and 2500 metres.

Changes in the earth's crust and glaciers have formed profound corries, scores of mountain lakes and river valleys. The water sources of the Rila Mountain cover over 250 lakes, and scores of mountain streams.

The lakes add to the beauty of the mountain. They are most often in the huge amphitheatrical corries, scraped by glaciers

in distant epochs. The most popular among them are the Seven Lakes, the Urdinite and Malyovitsa Lakes (North-Western Rila, the Ribni Ezera (Fish Lakes), the Djendem Lakes and the Smradlivo Lake (Central Rila); the Moussala Lakes under Moussala Peak (Eastern Rila).

The Rila Lakes form the sources of Bulgaria's biggest rivers: the Isker, Maritsa, Mesta, and most of the tributaries of the Strouma. They all abound in fine mountain trout.

A great part of the mountain slopes have a thick mantle of high firs and pines, with beech forests as one descends. Sunny clearings with colourful flowers and fruit: strawberries, raspberries and bilberries.

Wild animal life is represented by deer and wild mountain goats. There are several reservations where such flocks are bred and raised in their natural environment. Hunters are attracted by the heath-cock and rock partridges.

The pleasant environment has given birth to numerous climatic highland resorts — Borovets, G. Dimitrov and Yundola. Convenient starting points for excursions in the mountain: the Chaira resort (Eastern Rila), Semkovo (South-West Rila), Govedartsi in North-West Rila has fine skiing grounds.

The numerous villages, linked with good roads to Sofia, are favourite bases for outings in the mountain. Some 14 chalets and 13 shelters have been built along routes frequented by tourists.

Main starting points, routes and chalets

G o v e d a r t s i v i l l a g e. 1160 m above sea level. A summer and winter resort in the valley of the Cherni Isker River, with several rest homes, a hotel and tourist dormitory. A new automobile road leads from Govedartsi to the Central Mountaineering School in the valley of the River Malyovitsa. A regular bus service to Samokov (13 km) and Sofia (73 km).

S e d e m t e E z e r a (S e v e n L a k e s) C h a l e t. 2196 m above sea level, built in the fascinating corrie of the Seven Rila Lakes. A 5-hour walk from Govedartsi. Frequented mainly by anglers, as several of these lakes are rich in trout. Near Skakavitsa Chalet (3 hours) and the Ivan Vazov Chalet (2.30 hours).

M a l y o v i t s a C h a l e t (1992 m above sea level). Built in the most attractive and highly frequented part of the mountain

with such objects of interest to mountaineers as Malyovitsa, Elenin Vruh, Orlovets, Zliya Zub, Dvuglav, Lovnitsa, and others — where meets are often organized for Bulgarian and foreign mountaineers. There are numerous lakes in the area, the most famous of which is the Strashno Ezero Lake at the foot of the majestic Koupeni with a shelter near the banks of the lake.

The Malyovitsa Chalet is one hour distant from the Central Mountaineering School and a terminus of the automobile road from Govedartsi (via Giolechitsa). From Govedartsi, past Ovnersko to the Malyovitsa Chalet, it is a 4-hour walk. Possible excursions from Malyovitsa: to the Ivan Vazov Chalet — 5 hours; the Skakavitsa Chalet — 7 hours; the Ribni Ezera (Fish Lakes) — 9 hours; by way of the Strashno Ezero Lake to the Rila Monastery — 5 hours. All routes follow the high and attractive mountain divides.

Borovets Resort (See p. 99). Base for excursions in the eastern part of the Rila Mountain and to the Yastrebitsa Chalet — 3 hours; the Moussala Chalet — 4 hours; the Zavrachitsa Chalet — 6 hours; the meteorological station on Mt. Moussala — 6 hours.

Yastrebits Chalet (2350 m above sea level). A cozy little retreat on the Markudjika summit, on the road to Mt. Moussala.

Moussala Chalet (2389 m above sea level). Near the lowest of the Seven Moussala Lakes, on the road to Mt. Moussala (2 hours). Four hours from the Borovets resort, following the route along the valley of the Borovetska Bistritsa River; 5 hours by way of the former royal palace at Sitnyakovo and Peak Shatur. A convenient starting point for one of the main routes in the Rila Mountain: Borovets-Moussala Peak-the Ribni Ezera Chalet-Rila Monastery.

The Meteorological Station on Mt. Moussala (2925 m above sea level).

The highest observatory of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Built in 1923. In 1959 a special laboratory was opened for cosmic rays research.

Mount Moussala, highest peak in the Balkan Peninsula, is a granite dome towering above the Balkan Range, the rugged Pirin, the rolling green folds of the Rhodopes and the distant Shar Mountain.

Mount Moussala is a stage on the route to the Zavrachitsa Chalet (3 hours) over the Marichin Chal divide and Peak Manchcho; and the Boris Hadjisotirov Chalet (4 hours) past the Marichin Chal divide and Peak Ovcharets.

The Z a v r a c h i t s a C h a l e t (2178 m above sea level). Built in the valley of the Prava Maritsa River. The regular snowfall and fine skiing grounds around have turned it into a popular centre for winter tourism and skiing.

From the chalet to Borovets (via Sitnyakovo and Saru Gyor)—6 hours. An automobile road from Borovets, following the valley of the Maritsa River, comes to within an hours walk of the chalet.

The G e o r g i D i m i t r o v R e s o r t (See p 33). Starting point for the Vassil Kolarov Chalet (4.30 hours) and for daily excursions to the attractive environs.

The V a s s i l K o l a r o v C h a l e t (2224 m above sea level). Near the banks of the Ravnichalsko Lake (easternmost Rila lake). Objects of tourist interest in the vicinity: Ravni Chal and Sivri Chal Peaks. From the near-by Vassil Kolarov peak (2628 m) there is a broad view of the great maze of the Rhodope Mountains.

Suggested routes: to Peak Zavrachitsa (6 hours) on the road to Mt. Moussla; to the Chaira climatic resort (4 hours); to the Yundola resort (5 hours).

Y a k o r o u d a V i l l a g e (See p. 44). Starting point for outings from Pirin to Rila mountains — via the Boris Hadjisotirov Chalet (5 hours).

The B o r i s H a d j i s o t i r o v C h a l e t (2187 m above sea level). At the Grunchar Lake near Suha Vapa Peak, on the old road to Samokov-Razlog. Midway on the route from Borovets to the Rila Monastery, by way of Moussala Peak. To the Moussala Chalet — 6 hours; to the Ribni Ezera Chalet — 6 hours; to the Zavrachitsa Chalet — 2.30 hours, over the abandoned road on the Zavrachitsa divide. The chalet has been modernised, well furnished, with electric light and telephone lines.

Blagoevgrad (See p. 94)— Main starting point for excursions in South-West Rila. A road following the valley of the Blagoev-

gradska Bistritsa River leads to several climatic resorts along the upper reaches of the river and to the Makedonia Chalet. From the end of the road (the Kartala Forest Farm — 32 km from Blagoevgrad) to the chalet it is a 2.30-hours walk.

M a k e d o n i a C h a l e t (2166 m above sea level). On the divide at the foot of Peak Golyam Mechi Vruh (Aigidik), with fine skiing terrains all around. Outings to: Ribni Ezera (Fish Lakes) Chalet (5 hours); over the summit of Aladjaslap and Cherna Polyana to the Rila Monastery — 5 hours; along the colourful valley of the Iliyna River to the Semkovo highland resort — 2.30 hours; to the Predela Station — 8 hours (on the Sofia-Blagoevgrad-Razlog line).

This last route establishes a link between the Rila and Pirin mountains.

R i l a M o n a s t e r y (See p. 93). A major tourist base and starting point for excursions to North-West, South-West and Central Rila Mountain. At a few hours' walking distance from the monastery: the rugged peaks of Diavolski Igli, Dvouglov, Zliya Zub and Elenin Vruh, overshadowing the valley of the Rila River.

Routes starting from the Rila Monastery: to the Malyovitsa Chalet (6 hours); the Ivan Vazov Chalet (5 hours); the Makedonia Chalet (5 hours); the Ribni Ezera (Fish Lakes) Chalet (6 hours).

The R i b n i E z e r a (F i s h L a k e s) C h a l e t (2300 m above sea level). Built in the big corrie of two lakes. Intersection of the road between Peak Moussala and the Rila Monastery, a road branching off towards the Malyovitsa Chalet over Kobilno Branishte and the Strashnoto Ezero Lake, and the road to the Makedonia Chalet over the Kadiin Grob divide.

Roads to the Boris Hadjisotirov Chalet (6 hours), the Semkovo climatic resort (4 hours), the Makedonia Chalet (5 hours), Rila Monastery (6 hours) and the Malyovitsa Chalet (10 hours).

The biggest lake in the Rila Mountain — Smradlivoto — is 2.30 hours from the Ribni Ezera Chalet.

S t a n k e D i m i t r o v (see p. 92). Starting point for excursions to the chalets of Ivan Vazov, Skakavitsa and Seven Lakes. A regular bus service to the Sapareva Banya Spa, where one takes the route to the Skakavitsa Chalet. The new highland resort of Samora is only 2 km outside the town.

The Ivan Vazov Chalet (2360 m above sea level). In the foothills of Seimenski Kamuk Peak, serving as a link on the route leading from the Rila Monastery (6 hours), Malyovitsa Chalet (6 hours), Seven Lakes (2.30 hours) and Skakavitsa (4 hours).

The chalet is 6-7 hours from the village of Bistritsa (5 km from Blagoevgrad by road). The road passes by the Samokovishteto foresters' lodge in the valley of the Bistritsa River.

Object of tourist interest in the vicinity of the chalet: the Kalin Dam, at the highest altitude in the country, on the southern slopes of Kalin Peak.

The Skakavitsa Chalet (1856 m above sea level). The newest and biggest chalet in the Rila Mountain built in 1960. Room for 200. 4.30 hours from Sapareva Banya (13 km from the town of Stanke Dimitrov by road). The biggest Rila waterfall Skakavitsa is right near the chalet. Other points of tourist interest: the Seven Lakes corrie — 2.30 hours, through which there is a path to the Ivan Vazov Chalet — 4.30 hours, the Malyovitsa Chalet — 8 hours, and Rila Monastery — 9 hours.

The Pirin Mountains

Second biggest mountain in Bulgaria and third in the Balkan Peninsula — in the south-western corner of the country, between the valleys of the Mesta and Strouma rivers. A rugged mountain massif, with towering peaks, deep chasms and decorative marble crags forming a ring around the impressive Alpine landscape in the Northern Pirin.

Vihren Peak (2915 m) in the Northern Pirin rises over the massif, its vertical northern wall forming the deep Kazana corrie. There are altogether some 130 lakes in this part of the mountain, all at an altitude of about 2000—2100 metres. The biggest of them all is the Popovo Lake and the Gorno Gazeisko is at the highest altitude (2680 m). In the big Bunderitsa, Vasilashki, Varyavishki, Kremenski, Belemeto and Popovo cirques each group several lakes, forming the sources of several swift mountain streams. In some of the lakes there is fine trout.

On the steep rocks in the Northern Pirin one finds the rare Edelweiss, and other Alpine flora.

In the forest belt there are deer and at higher altitudes — whole families of wild mountain goats.

The towns of Razlog and Bansko and the village of Dobrinishte are the best bases for climbing the Northern Pirin. They are linked by good roads with Sofia (via Blagoevgrad and Predel) and Plovdiv (via Velingrad and the village of Yakorouda).

Starting points, routes and chalets

R a z l o g (See p. 45). Starting point for excursions and traverse over the high mountainside from Pirin Peak (highest in the mountain) to Vihren Peak and the Vihren chalet. At Razlozhki Souhodol Peak there is a shelter that is particularly useful in winter marches.

The P. K. Yavorov Chalet (1740 m. above sea level). 4 km from Razlok in the Souhodolski Polyani clearings. Points of interest in its vicinity: the «Bayuvi Dupki» reservation, the Dautovo Lake under the peak by the same name, and the Stulbite terraced ridge, growing the rare edelweiss. The chalet is a useful starting point for excursions to or from the Vihren Chalet, over the Koncheto sharp ridge, the narrowest passage in the Pirin.

B a n s k o (See p. 45). The town is a starting point for the two most highly frequented chalets in the Pirin Mountain — Vihren (4 hours) and Damyanitsa (4.30 hours).

The **V i h r e n C h a l e t** (2060 m above sea level). Biggest in the Pirin Mountain. Built at the foot of Vihren and Todorin peaks, in close proximity to the Bunderitsa circus. Frequented by thousands of tourists on their way to Vihren and Todorin peaks (2.30 hours), the Damyanitsa Chalet (4 hours), Sinanitsa (5 hours). Edelweiss in the region around, and 35 minutes from the chalet is the ancient Baikusheva black pine.

The **D a m y a n i t s a C h a l e t** (1895 m above sea level). In the valley of the Damyanitsa River at the foot of Gazei Peak. Starting point for excursions to the central part of the Northern Pirin and the Gazeiski Lakes, Polezhan Peak and the rocky crown of the Strazhite; the Valyavishki and Belemeto circuses, Kamenitsa Peak and the Popovo Lake (biggest in the Pirin Mountain). The Vassilashko Lake is about 30 minutes from the chalet, in the circus on the road to the Vihren Chalet (4 hours). A favourite tenting ground near the lake. The chalet has a telephone line.

D o b r i n i s h t e V i l l a g e. Railway terminus of the Septemvri Station line (via Velingrad), and starting point for excursions to the chalets Gotse Delchev (3 hours) and Bezbog (5 hours).

The G o t s e D e l c h e v C h a l e t (1600 m above sea level). A popular base for tourists exploring the beauties of the Northern Pirin mountain. There is a motor road right up to the chalet. To the Bezbog Chalet — 2 hours; Damyanitsa Chalet — 7 hours.

The B e z b o g C h a l e t has recently been built near the Bezbog Lake on the eastern slope of the peak. An important tourist base because of its proximity to such interesting places as the Popovo Lake, the terraced Kremenski Circus (with three lakes), and the Strazhite massif.

M e l n i k (See p. 96). Starting point for the Pirin Chalet (6 hours). The only chalet on the southern slopes of the Northern Pirin.

The P i r i n C h a l e t (1600 m above sea level). Near the Trite Reki divide, in a picturesque fir and pine forest. Good connection with the Damyanitsa Chalet (8-9 hours) and the Bezbog Chalet (5.30 hours) over the Demirkapiya ridge.

S a n d a n s k i (See p. 95). The town is the nearest approach to the Yane Sandanski Chalet (Popova Luka), the only shelter in the western slopes of the Western Pirin (4 hours from the town).

T h e S a n d a n s k i C h a l e t (1230 m above sea level). Built in a sunny clearing, near turbulent mountain brooks. Starting point for the Sinanitsa peak and lake (4 hours); the Chair Lakes (3 hours); Kamenitsa Peak and the Belemeto Circus (5 hours); the Pirin Chalet (5 hours); the Damyanitsa Chalet (5 hours) and the Vihren Chalet (6 hours).

The main route in the Pirin mountain: the town of Bansko—the Vihren Chalet-Damyanitsa Chalet-Gotse Delchev Chalet and Dobrinishte village is well marked and can be made in agreeable daily traverses not over 5 hours.

The Rhodope mountains

Covering an area of about 15,000 square kilometres, they are divided into two main massives — the Eastern and Western Rhodopes, intersected by scores of mountain streams, amongst which the Arda River.

The waters of many of the streams have now been tamed behind the walls of new irrigation dams. One can see the great stretches of water formed by the artificial lakes behind the wall of our new water power projects: Stouden Kladenets, Vasil Kolarov, Beglika and Batak. Entire new highland resorts and rest homes have come into being near the banks of the lakes.

The Rhodope Mountains abound in mineral water springs, many of which have grown into major balneological centres of national importance, such as Velingrad, Narechen, the Haskovo mineral baths, and others.

The Rhodope Mountain resorts are now linked by a network of good asphalt or paved roads, giving easy access to numerous objects of tourist interest, and whole new 'mining and industrial centres and settlements near the rich Rhodope ore fields.

Main starting points and chalets

Assenovgrad (See p. 50). For objects of tourist interest along the course of the Assenitsa River (Chaya), and the chalets of Rouen (3 hours) and Bezovo (3 hours).

The Bezovo Chalet (1200 m above sea level). A new and modern building on the eastern slopes of Bezovo Peak. It is a 3-hour walk to the Bachkovo Monastery (See p. 50).

The Rouen Chalet (1215 m above sea level). At the foot of Rouen Peak (1312 m) on the Boukata ridge. Accommodation for 80. The road from Assenovgrad leads through the villages of Voden and Yavorovo. The big Zdravets Chalet is 75 minutes away.

Plovdiv (See p. 35). Starting point for the Zdravets Chalet (24 km), the Byala Cherkva climatic resort (34 km by road) and the Persenk Chalet (38 km).

The Zdravets Chalet (1175 m above sea level)! The biggest chalet in the Rhodope Mountains, providing accommodation

for 300, with every comfort. Shady woodland and sunny clearings for hiking.

Byala Cherkva highland resort. 10 km to the south of the Zdravets Chalet, with 50 villas. From Byala Cherkva to the Persenk Chalet — 6 hours.

The Persenk Chalet (1750 m above sea level). 2 hours from the village of Lilkovo (38 km by road from Plovdiv), built in a big clearing to the north of Persenk Peak. Fine skiing grounds. The next nearest chalet is the Choudni Mostove — a 2-hour walk.

The Kabata Chalet (1200 m above sea level). In the Kabata region of the Rhodope Mountains. A Trade Union climatic resort. To the village of Orehovo (with bus service to Assenovgrad) — 2 hours and to the Choudni Mostove Chalet — 1 hour.

The Choudni Mostove Chalet (1450 m above sea level). Built under a rare freak of nature — great arches carved out of the rock by the waters of the Zabardska River. The rocks grow the rare dark-green Rhodope rose (*Haberlea Rodopensis*).

There is an automobile road right up to the chalet, forking off the main road leading from the town of Assenovgrad to the Vassil Kolarov highland resort (branching off at the Sinite Hancehta (Blue inns) near the village of Hvoina).

Students Chalet (1640 m above sea level). Built on the northern slopes of the beautiful Mourgavets Peak near the Vassil Kolarov resort (20 minutes). From the near-by Snezhanka Peak there is a fine panorama of the rolling mountain massif and the valley of the Smolyan Lakes. To the Choudni Mostove Chalet — 8 hours; to the Persenk Chalet — 5 hours; to the Hubcha Karst source — 90 minutes.

The Perelik Chalet (1100 m above sea level). A popular base for the climb of peak Perelik (1 hour), with a fine view of the Western and Eastern parts of the mountain. Also for the village of Shiroka Luka an old village that has retained its old Bulgarian architectural style. An automobile road to the Krichim Station (87 km) and to the town of Smolyan (22 km).

BALKANTOURIST

Balkantourist is a State Enterprise charged with the organization of tourist and holiday travel in Bulgaria.

Balkantourist runs a network of modern hotels, restaurants, chalets, camping grounds and services in all cities and main resorts of the country and all places of tourist interest.

The Balkantourist restaurants are under experienced chefs, with a fine cuisine able to meet the most exacting tastes.

Balkantourist organizes tours for individual or group travel of foreign visitors coming to our country to all places of tourist and historical interest, resorts and holiday spots over established routes or such suggested by the interested parties, providing experienced guides speaking the necessary foreign languages.

Balkantourist has its own garages and motor cars, buses and coaches for group travel or hire.

At big hotels, and at the airport in Sofia and in different resorts there are Balkantourist Information and Foreign Exchange Bureaux. Foreign travellers exchanging currencies at these Bureaux are entitled to a 40 per cent premium over the official Bank rate.

Balkantourist has many publications intended to facilitate the foreign travellers coming to our country — pamphlets, folders, guides, tourist and road maps, etc.

Balkantourist:

Head office — 1, Lenin Square, Sofia, Tel. 7-75-74

Cables — Balkantourist, Sofia. Telex 538

Office hours — 8.30-12.30 and 1.30-5.30 Saturdays — 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Ticket Booking Office — 2, Blvd. Dondoukov, Sofia

Tel. 7-00-84. Sundays and after working hours — Bureau at the Balkan Hotel — Tel. 7-65-41

Note: The addresses and tel. numbers of the Balkantourist branches in the country are given in each city and resort.

Communication Lines

Bulgaria is linked by air services with every country in the world. The country is on several international railway lines and highways, with shipping lines accepting bookings for every maritime country.

Air Lines

Sofia Airport is a convenient junction to almost every country in Europe and the other continents, with the following airlines: Sofia-Bucharest-Kiev-Moscow (with an extension to Pyongyang).

Peking-Ulanbator-Stockholm-Helsinki

Sofia-Budapest-Prague-Berlin-Warsaw, with a change to Paris, London, Amsterdam, Frankfurt (via Budapest or Prague)

Sofia-Belgrade-Vienna-Frankfurt-Berlin-Paris-Copenhagen, with a change to Rome, Geneva, London and South America

Bucharest-Sofia-Belgrade-Athens — for the countries in the Near and Far East

Amsterdam-Dusseldorf-Budapest-Vienna-Sofia-Athens-Beirut-

Damascus-Bagdad-Cairo (KLM)

The TABSO (Bulgarian Airline) has representatives in many countries

Aeroflot-USSR, Air France—France, Air India—India, AUA-Austria, ČSA — Czechoslovakia, Deutsche Lufthanza-The German Democratic Republic, UAT-Yugoslavia, KLM-Holland, LOT-Poland, MALEV-Hungary, SABENA-Belgium, SAS-Scandinavian Airways, SWISS-AIR—Switzerland, TAROM-Romania, and others.

In order to assure travel on the desired date, booking should be made with some of the TABSO Representatives abroad. All changes should be notified by the travellers 48 hours in advance.

Railway communications

Bulgaria is on the following international railway lines: SIMPLON ORIENT EXPRESS — three times weekly (London-Calais-Lausanne-Milan-Trieste-Ljubljana-Belgrade-Sofia-Istanbul).

DANUBE EXPRESS — Sofia-Kishinev-Kiev-Moscow.

BALT ORIENT EXPRESS — Sofia-Belgrade-Budapest-(Warsaw)-Prague-Berlin-Stockholm.

Daily connections between Bulgaria and the Scandinavian and other European countries.

Connections with other European express trains.

BALKAN EXPRESS — daily connections between Vienna-Istanbul via Zagreb-Belgrade-Sofia

TAUREN EXPRESS — daily connections between Istanbul-London, via Sofia-Belgrade-Zagreb-Ljubljana-Salzburg-Munich-Cologne-Brussels.

Maritime and fluvial communications

The Bulgarian Black Sea ports of Varna and Bourgas have convenient communications with every maritime country in the world.

There are regular lines between the Port of Varna and the Soviet Union, Albania, Greece, the United Arab Republic, the Lebanon, and other countries.

The River Danube furnishes a direct link with Rumania, Yugoslavia, Hungary and the other Danubian countries.

Highways

Several international highways cross Bulgaria, establishing a direct link between Europe and Asia.

The principal highway running across Bulgaria is the international road running from Europe via Belgrade-Sofia-Istanbul.

The road is asphalted or paved from one frontier point to the other, and convenient for motoring during all seasons of the year. There are also good road communications with Rumania over the Bridge of Friendship on the Danube at Roussé, as well as with Greece. For the moment the road to Greece is closed to passenger traffic.

FRONTIER POINTS

Yugoslav border by road — Kalotino
by RR line — Dragoman

Rumanian border by road and rail — Roussé (for Bucharest)
Vidin (for Kalafat and Kraiova)
Kardam (for Constantza).

Turkish border by road — Capitan Andreevo
by rail — Svilengrad

Greek border — by road — Kulata.

Airports: Sofia, Plovdiv, Bourgas, and Varna

Black Sea Ports: Varna and Bourgas.

The Bulgarian Touring Club. (Member of the IAA and the ITA)

Its services are available to all members of the above international automobile or tourist associations, travelling through Bulgaria.

What every motorist should have: Driving License, an International Customs Pass, or triptyque issued by the ITA, number plate and certificate for the vehicle.

Insurance while on Bulgarian territory is voluntary, but third party or general insurance may be effected by all frontier customs authorities and all services and branches of the Bulgarian State Insurance Institute.

The sale of petrol and lubricants is free, against the exchange of foreign currency, at the following price: (per litre):

Petrol — 70 octane — 0.2 leva

Gas oil — 0.12 leva

Lubricants: MK oil — 1.20 leva

Diesel oil — 1.12 leva

Brake oil — 3.20 leva

Grease — 0.80 leva.

Address of the BULGARIAN TOURING CLUB

10, Rakovski St., Tel. 7-01-13.

C a m p i n g f a c i l i t i e s:

Foreign motorists travelling in our country can avail themselves of the Balkantourist camping services. There are fine camping grounds with many amenities in many parts of the country, namely:

In the vicinity of Sofia: near the Isker Dam, on the road to Borovets resort; near Vrana palace, Belovo Station, on the Sofia-Plovdiv-Istanbul highway; Plovdiv — at the ninth kilometer on the road to Sofia; Nesebur — on the Black Sea coast, near the international seaside resort of Sunny Beach; Varna (biggest city on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast) — at the Golden Sands resort 17 km north of the town; at Drouzhba Resort, 9 km north of the town on the road to the Golden Sands resort; Mount Stoleto v — in the Balkan Range, on the road from Plovdiv to Turnovo via Kazanluk; At the Boaza in the highlands near the town of Teteven.

The camping grounds have special parking room for about 100 cars in an enclosure, with lighting in the evening, medical

centre, showerbaths with hot and cold water. There are stalls for snacks, cigarettes, souvenirs, and other necessities;

Charges for the use of the Balkantourist camping grounds:
Motorists using their own tent — 0.60 dollars per tent for two.
For a family tent — 1 dollar;

With tent provided by Balkantourist — 1.50 dollars per tent
for two;

— 2.50 dollars per tent for four;

For cars with trailers — 1.30 dollars.

Motor cycles, motorbikes and boats — 0.25 dollars.

Motor cars — 0.35 dollars.

Beds, mattresses, pillows, sheets, etc. — extra.

NOTE: Every tourist agency should mark in a special voucher the services which the motorist or traveller would like to obtain. On arrival this voucher should be presented at any of the Balkantourist services in Sofia, Plovdiv, or Roussé. The Bulgarian tickets received in exchange should be given to the care-taker of the camping ground.

VOUCHERS

Vouchers are issued by all Tourist Travel Agencies representing Balkantourist abroad, at prices fixed in foreign exchange at the official rate of the Bulgarian National Bank. Every voucher should be dated, noting the category of the service required, days on which board and lodging must be provided, and any other services desired. The vouchers are issued in four copies, of which the first is given to the client, for presentation to Balkantourist upon arrival in Bulgaria, so as to receive in exchange tickets for the required accommodation, board and services. In case of group travel, the first voucher should be given to the leader of the group for presentation to the Balkantourist guide upon arrival in this country.

The first copy of the voucher must accompany the application for a Bulgarian visa made before the respective Bulgarian diplomatic or consular service abroad.

The second copy is forwarded to Balkantourist in Sofia, so as to give prior notice of the services the traveller might require.

The third copy is retained by the Travel Bureau that has issued the voucher, for reference and accounting purposes.

Refunds for unused vouchers can be effected upon the prior approval of Balkantourist, and upon giving a 48-hour notice.

Vouchers are issued either for basic Balkantourist services (hotel and food) or for additional services, changes of route, tours, and so on. Vouchers are issued for full board only. In addition to the presentation of such vouchers, Balkantourist caters likewise for all foreign travellers presenting a Bordereau, showing that the foreign currency officially exchanged is sufficient to meet the travelling expenses during their sojourn in this country. All transfers of foreign exchange or payments made to Balkantourist should be effected through some correspondent of the Bulgarian National Bank (Balkantourist account No 46/2085). After making the transfer, foreign travellers should advise Balkantourist of the date of arrival, duration of sojourn, in order that all necessary arrangements might be made accordingly.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Entry or transit visas are issued by all Bulgarian diplomatic and consular missions abroad, on condition that the traveller comes to Bulgaria on arrangement by some Travel Bureau representing Balkantourist abroad.

The voucher issued by the Travel Bureau should mention the number of days for the pension, and the category.

Visa applications, accompanied by such vouchers, should be presented at the most convenient Bulgarian diplomatic or consular mission, with a photo. Foreign motorists or guests coming to Bulgaria on their holiday are entitled to obtain a Bulgarian visa on the presentation of a Bordereau to the effect that they have remitted to Balkantourist the sum necessary to cover the expenses of their sojourn in Bulgaria. A photo should accompany the application.

The charge for a Bulgarian visa is uniform for all countries.

Whenever foreign travellers desire to extend their sojourn in Bulgaria, they should obtain from a Balkantourist Bureau a voucher, payable in foreign exchange, for the additional days or services.

No vouchers are required for ordinary transit visas (valid 48 hours), which are issued without formalities.

A tourist transit visa to Bulgaria (valid for a 5-day sojourn) can be obtained on condition that the visit is prepaid, as stated above. Two photos are required.

CUSTOMS FORMALITIES

The customs formalities for foreign travellers coming to Bulgaria (tourists, vacationists, etc). have been reduced to the strictest minimum. Every foreign traveller is entitled to bring into the country all necessary personal belongings, sporting equipment, travel accessories, cameras, films, wireless sets, a portable typewriter and dictophone, bicycle, etc. for personal use. On departure these belongings have to be taken out of the country again, as their sale in Bulgaria is not permitted.

In addition to his personal belongings, every foreign traveller can take the necessary food and drinks — a maximum of 2 kilos of meat products, sausages, etc.; 2 kilos of confectionery, sweets, etc.; 2 kilos of dairy products; 2 litres of brandy; 3 litres of wine; 250 grams of cigarettes, and small souvenirs). All this is duty free, and no customs license is required. The export of other goods or quantities over the ones stated above is permitted only upon obtaining a permit from the nearest Customs House and the payment of a 10 per cent duty on their value. Leather and other more expensive goods should be bought only at state or co-operative enterprises.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

The importation of foreign currencies is unrestricted, but they have to be declared at the frontier point and marked in a special Bordereau. The amounts exchanged are also noted on the Bordereau, so that on leaving the country the foreign tourist or vacationist can take out again the unspent amount.

Foreign currencies are exchanged only by the Bulgarian National Bank, the customs services at the frontier points and all Balkantourist Information and Foreign Exchange Bureaux.

The importation or export of Bulgarian currency is prohibited. The leva obtained against foreign exchange can only be spent in this country. Amounts of leva obtained against the exchange of foreign currencies, if not spent in this country, have to be declared and delivered to the customs authorities at the frontier point of exit, against receipt. This money is sent to the Bulgarian National Bank, which remits the equivalent in foreign exchange to the address abroad indicated by the foreign traveller. Only currencies marked on the Bordereau

can be exchanged in this country. This also holds true of Bulgarian leva obtained against the exchange of vouchers.

Foreign travellers are entitled to demand the remittance of such sums to a person indicated by them in Bulgaria.

BALKANTOURIST HOTELS

The network of Balkantourist Hotels are divided into five categories — Special, Luxe, First, Second and Third.

The Special and Luxe categories provide single room with bath in hotels of the Luxe category.

The First, Second and Third categories provide a bed in rooms of two or more beds.

The Balkantourist Hotel rates are the following:

Category	Adults dollars	Children under 10.
Special	11.00	6.50
Luxe	8.50	5.00
First	6.50	4.00
Second	5.50	3.30
Third	4.50	2.70

Travellers desiring to be accommodated in a double-bedded room in the Special category pay 9.50 dollars, and in the Luxe category — 7.50 dollars.

First category travellers desiring to use a single room will be charged 1.20 to 1.50 dollars extra a day.

The rate quoted for children means an extra couch put in their parents' room, and half of the normal board for adults.

There is an off-season 25 per cent reduction of the rates quoted for all Bulgarian Black Sea resorts. (September 15 to June 15).

Travellers and vacationists are immediately upon presentation of their Balkantourist vouchers. Unless a particular reservation has been made, foreign travellers are entitled instead of such services to receive the equivalent of their deposit in Bulgarian leva, at the official rate of the Bulgarian National Bank.

TRANSFERS

Sofia

Dollars

From the RR station to the hotel, or back

Private Balkantourist car for 1—3 persons	2.80 dol.
By bus, for group travel, per person	0.40 dol.

From the airport to the hotel, or back

Private Balkantourist car for 1—3 persons	5 dol.
Bus, for group travel, per person	0.50 dol.

Drouzhba Resort

From the RR station to the hotel, or back

Balkantourist private car for 1—3 persons	5 dol.
Bus, for group travel, per person	0.60 dol.

From the airport to the hotel, or back

Balkantourist private car for 1—3 persons	7 dol.
Bus, for group travel, per person	0.80 dol.

Golden Sands Resort

From the RR station to the hotel or back

Balkantourist private car for 1—3 persons	7.50 dol.
Bus, for group travel, per person	0.60 dol.

From the airport to the hotel, or back

Balkantourist private car for 1—3 persons	8.00 dol.
Bus, for group travel, per person	0.80 dol.

Nessebur (Sunny Beach Resort)

From Bourgas RR station to the hotel, or back

Balkantourist private car 1—3 persons	9	dol.
Bus, for group travel, per person	1	dol.

Bourgas Airport to the hotel, or back

Balkantourist private car for 1—3 persons	7.50	dol.
Bus, for group travel, per person	0.30	dol.
Stops, per hour	0.70	dol.

Extra charges for guides, depending on the time for which engaged, and whether in town or country.

Services of a guide in town (Depending on the hours employed) 1 to 5 dol.

Services of guide in the country. 1 to 7 dol.

Services of guide in the country for longer periods daily 10 dol.

The parties employing a guide are responsible for his travel fare (unless using their own transport).

Balkantourist cars for hire

Touring cars with driver: 4.20 dollars for the first 30 km, and then 0.12 dollars for every additional km.

Buses: 0.15 dollars per person for every 10 km.

Stoppages: 0.70 dollars per hour (cars or buses)

«Drive yourself»: A deposit of 100 dollars required. From 1 to 7 days — 12 dollars daily for a maximum of 100 km, and then 0.08 dollars for every additional kilometre.

Over 7 days up to 100 km — 10.80 dollars and 0.07 dollars for every additional km.

Sightseeing tours in the towns

	Cars		Buses	
Sofia — 2 hours	7	dollars	1.50	dollars
Sofia and the Golden Bridges in the Vitosha Mountain	14	„	2.50	„
Varna, Drouzhba, Golden Sands and Aladja Monastery	15	„	2.50	„
Plovdiv	6	„	1.50	„
Turnovo	6	„	—	„
Nessebur and Sunny Beach	6	„	1.50	„

Excursions

From Sofia	Cars	Buses
To Isker dam (half-day)	19 dollars	2 dol.
To Borovets	27 „	2.50 „
Rila Monastery (full day)	38.5 „	4.00 „

These tours are very convenient for travellers passing in transit through the Bulgarian capital, giving them the opportunity in the short time at their disposal to visit the biggest irrigation dam in the country, the splendid Borovets highland resort and the historical Rila Monastery.

From Plovdiv to the Bachkovo Monastery (half day)
16.00 1.50

Suggested particularly to travellers or motorists passing in transit through the country to Istanbul, or back.

Golden Sands

To Balchik (half-day)	19.00 „	1.60 „
To Nessebar (full day)	40 „	4 „

From Nessebur

To Varna, Drouzhba Resort and the Golden Sands (full day)	40 „	4 „
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Recommended to foreign guests spending their holidays on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

From Turnovo	24.00 „	2.50 „
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To Mt. Stoletov (half day)	5.00 „	1.00 „
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To Arbanassi village (2 hours)

Interesting excursions to the Balkan Range and the village boasting fine architectural monuments.

BALKANTOURIST TOURS

Worked out so as to give foreign travellers coming to Bulgaria the best opportunity of seeing objects of interest in the country, historical monuments, etc. Special tours planned on request.

Rates

Routes	Duration	rate in dollars		
		Ist Category	IInd Categ.	IIIrd Categ.
1	3 days	11	28	25
2	5 "	59	53	48
3	6 "	59	53	47
4	14 "	117	104	91
5	6 "	49	43	38
6	10 "	90	80	70
7	10 "	81	72	63

The rates for transfers, tours and excursions are for groups of 25, including the services of a guide (food not included).

Detailed description of the tours

1. T h r e e d a y s:

Sofia — Rila Monastery — the Borovets highland resort — Plovdiv. Convenient for all who have only a few days to spare.

2. F i v e d a y s:

Sofia — Borovets — Plovdiv — Turnovo (via Stara Zagora and Mt. Stoletov) — Varna — Drouzhba — Golden Sands — Nessebur — Sunny Beach — Bourgas — return to Sofia.

In a short while visitors can make this extensive tour visiting interesting localities, particularly our seaside resorts.

3. S i x d a y s:

Sofia — Vratsa — Pleven — Turnovo — Mt. Stoletov — Plovdiv (via Kazanluk and Stara Zagora) — return to Sofia.

4. F o u r t e e n d a y s:

Sofia — Rila Monastery — Plovdiv — Mt. Stoletov — Turnovo — Varna — Drouzhba — Golden Sands — Aladja Monastery — Balchik — Nessebur — Sunny Beach — Varna — r e t u r n t o S o f i a b y a i r.

The tours cover most resorts and objects of tourist interest in the land. The sojourn between the 6th and 12th, at the Bulgarian seaside resorts is the greatest attraction of the tour.

5. Six days

(Particularly arranged for the rose-picking season) Sofia — Rila Monastery — Borovets resort — Plovdiv — different objects in the Valley of Roses — old Koprivshtitsa in the Balkan Mountains — return to Sofia. A tour when the world-famous valley of Roses is at its best, with opportunities to learn how the precious attar is made.

6. Ten days

(The interest centering on museums and historical monuments and our most modern seaside resorts). Sofia — Pleven — Turnovo — Arbanassi village — Kolarovgrad — antique Pliska — Varna — Drouzhba — Golden Sands — Nessebur — Sunny Beach — Plovdiv — return to Sofia.

7. Ten days

(Interest centered on old monasteries): Sofia — Rila Monastery — Peroushtitsa village — Plovdiv — Bachkovo Monastery — return to Plovdiv — Mt. Stoletov — Turnovo — Preobrazhenski Monastery — Arbanassi village — Troyan Monastery — Pleven — return to Sofia. Interesting and colorful country.

Diplomatic Missions Accredited to Sofia

ALBANIA 18, Khan Asparuh St.; tel. 5-14-67
ARGENTINA 31, Oborishte St.; tel. 4-20-08
AUSTRIA 13, Boul. Rousski; tel. 8-10-17
BELGIUM 38, Boul. Patr. Eftimi; tel. 7-00-24
CHINA 18, Boul. Rousski; tel. 7-86-48
CZECHOSLOVAKIA 16, Boul. Tolbukhine, tel. 7-86-11, 7-86-12
DENMARK Bucharest, 20, Alea Modrogan; tel. 17-28-91
FINLAND 1, Oborishte St.; tel. 4-38-20
FRANCE 29, Oborishte St.; tel. 4-11-71, 4-11-72
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC 1, Captain Andreyev St.; tel. 6-20-46
GREAT BRITAIN 65, Boul. Tolbukhine, tel. 6-22-50
GREECE 68, Boul. Klement Gottwald, tel. 4-37-70
HOLLAND Belgrade, 29, Simina St.; tel. 29-345
HUNGARY 57, Sixth September St.; tel. 6-20-21
ISRAEL 34, Liuben Karavelov St.; tel. 6-24-97
INDIA Belgrade, 9, Proletarskih Brigada St.; tel. 32-181
ITALY 2, Shipka St.; tel. 8-17-05
JAPAN Belgrade 2, Proletarskin Brigada St.; tel. 31-554
KOREA 25, Khan Krum St., tel. 8-35-40
MONGOLIA Budapest, 23, Berzutca tel. 469-551
NORWAY Belgrade, 19, Tolstoeva St. 50-232
POLAND 46, Khan Krum St., tel. 6-15-80, 6-21-52
RUMANIA 10, Dimiter Polyakov St.; tel. 4-33-81
SOUDAN Moscow, 9, Vorovskovo; tel. 21-69-50
SWEDEN Moscow, 44 Vorovskovo; tel. B 3-22-26
SWITZERLAND 32, Shipka St.; tel. 4-32-98
TURKEY 23, Dimiter Polyakov St.; tel. 4-13-11
UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC 29, Shipka St., tel. 4-19-57
UNITED STATES 1, Boul. Stamboliiski tel. 7-68-21, 7-66-69
U. S. S. R. 92, Rakovski St.; tel. 8-18-83, 8-18-06
VIETNAM 12, Oborishte St.; tel. 4-14-95
YUGOSLAVIA 3, G. G. Dej, tel. 4-32-37, 4-33-82





St. Sofia church, Sofia



Sofia



Plovdiv



Roussé



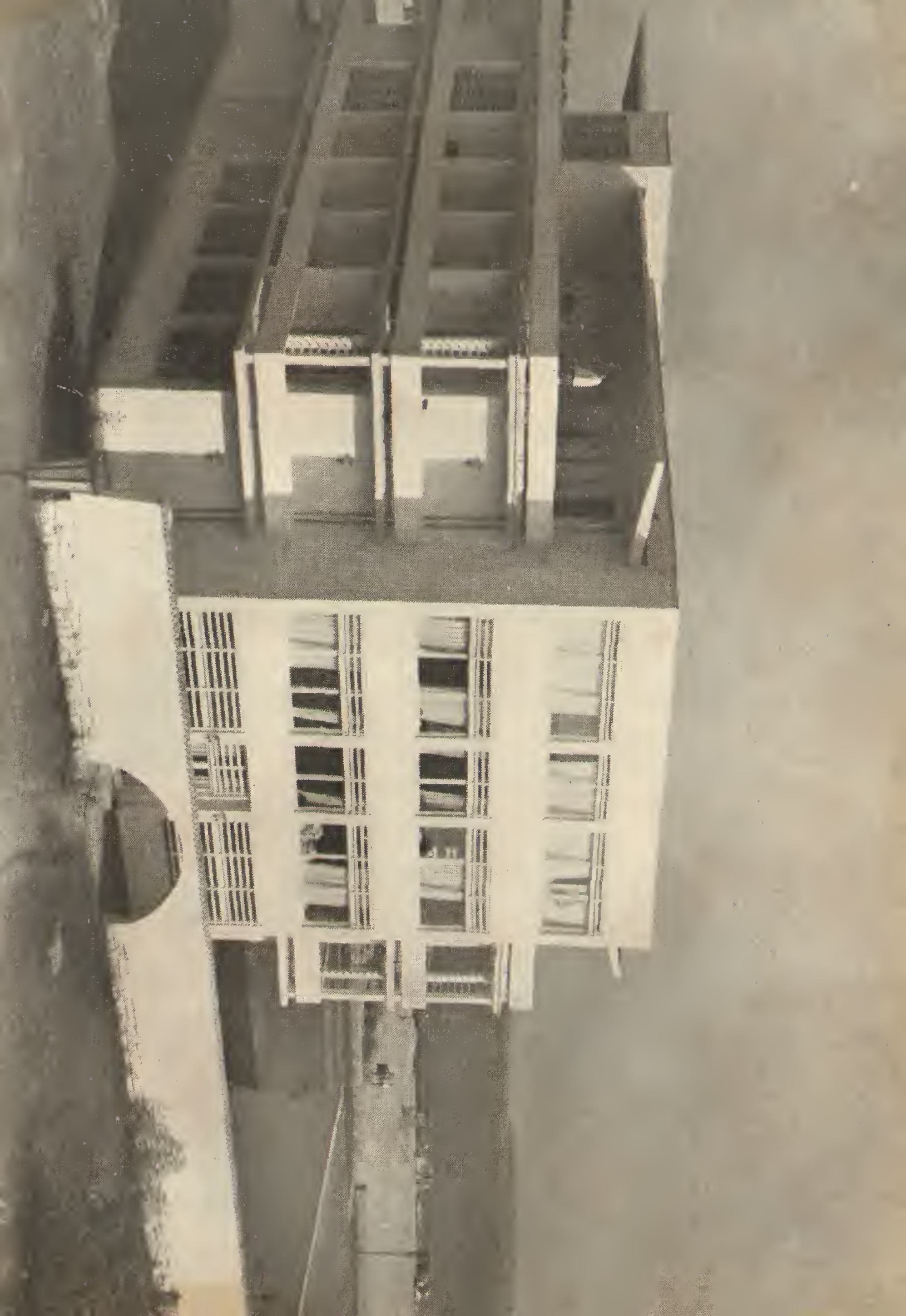
Golden Sands



Golden Sands

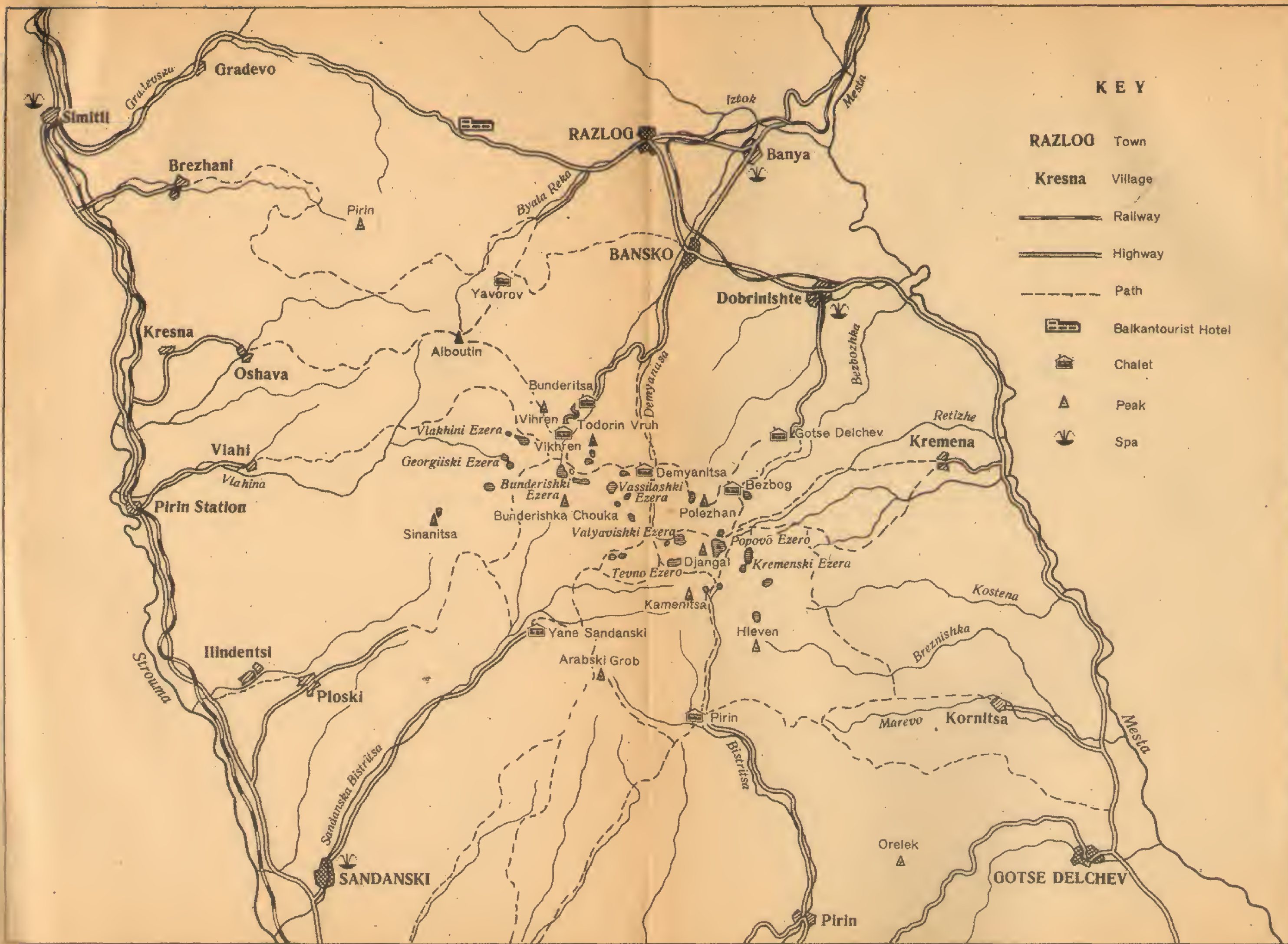
Sunny Beach







PIRIN



KEY

- RAZLOG** Town
- Kresna** Village
- Railway
- Highway
- Path
- Balkantourist Hotel
- Chalet
- Peak
- Spa

R H O D O P E S

